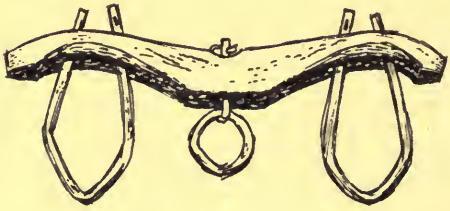
BLOOMINGTON

ILLINOIS

Republican Convention

May 29, 1856

LINCOLN ROOM



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Taken early in 1857 by Alex. Hesler, of Chicago. By permission and courtesy of the S. S. McClure Company.

TRANSACTIONS

OF

The McLean County Historical Society

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS.

Meeting of May 29, 1900
Commemorative of the

Convention of May 29, 1856

That Organized the Republican
Party in the State of Illinois

EDITED BY EZRA M. PRINCE

SECRETARY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

VOL. III.

Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co.,
Bloomington, Illinois.
1900.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.

JOHN H. BURNHAM. GEORGE P. DAVIS. EZRA M. PRINCE.

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LINCOLN ROOM
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PREFACE.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN has become the civic ideal of his native land, and is fast becoming the ideal of the self-governing, the democracy of all lands, the incarnation in the political world of the highest ideals of our common christianity. The most momentous event in his life was the convention at Major's hall, Bloomington, Ill., May 29, 1856. There he formally, definitely broke with the old order of things, and became the master spirit in a new organization which was destined not only to destroy slavery and remove that great obstacle to our national progress, but, in other respects, to make a most profound and lasting impress upon our state and national life.

The McLean County Historical Society is composed of members of different political parties who naturally differ as to the wisdom of the policies of the Republican party, but their importance is questioned by no one. It is, therefore, a proper subject for historical research, and it is eminently fit that the historical society of the county where that convention was held, where its master spirit was so well known and so loved, and whose citizens were so potent a factor in his nomination for the presidency, should commemorate an event of such supreme public importance.

Mr. Lincoln was the inspirer, the soul of this convention. On that occasion he delivered the great speech of his life, not only rising to the loftiest heights of impassioned eloquence, but with the prophetic insight of the seer

forecasting the great struggle with the slave power, and predicting the ultimate triumph of freedom.

In the interests of historical research and truth, this meeting was called, and this book, its proceedings, is published.

In the arrangement of the program of the meeting the speakers, as far as possible, were selected from the members of the convention, and on account of their identification with and special knowledge of the subject treated by them.

The society is indebted to the S. S. McClure Company and to the Century Company for the permission to use several pictures of the participants in the convention, to the New York *Evening Post* for copy of letter of John H. Bryant, to the Ohio Archæological and Historical Society for copy of telegrams, to the Chicago Historical Society for the use of their newspaper files; also to Mr. Dwight E. Frink for a drawing of Major's hall, and to the committee of arrangements for the means with which to publish this book.

E. M. Prince, Secretary.

George Perrin Davis,
John Howard Burnham,
Ezra Morton Prince,
Committee on Publication.

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Bloomington, Ill., Newspaper Accounts of Meeting of May 29, 1900.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION.

Back through the changing years, delving in the records of many decades, the McLean County Historical Society has secured data of one of the most interesting events in the early political history of Illinois. After months of research and tireless endeavor, the results are seen in an anniversary celebration today of the first state convention of the Republican party in Illinois. Out of the agitation against slavery the Republican party was born, gathering to its ranks men from all parties who were moved by the single impulse, the freedom of the black man.

It is the story of the events that led up to the first convention of the new party in Illinois and a recital of the proceedings of that famous gathering held in May, 1856, in Major's hall of this city. Then it was that the famous "Lost Speech" of Abraham Lincoln was delivered, the speech which was so enthralling in its eloquence that the reporters sat with pencils in hand, forgetful of their duties, and failing to take notes.

But the speakers of the celebration can best tell the story of that gathering. They met this afternoon in the Unitarian church a little band of gray headed men, and an audience that filled every seat, listened with the most intense interest to their story of the days before the war. Passion ran high in those days, and friends became enemies in arguing the momentous question of slavery. Parties crumbled to dust in the mighty crucible of public opinion. Neighbors became antagonized and many were martyred on the anti-slavery cross. The feeling grew hotter until cooled by the blood of the thousands in

the great Civil War that followed. Every speaker told a tale of thrilling interest and the student of early politics found a mine rich in information. The pages of history could not be made more attractive.—*Bulletin* (Bloomington, Ill.), May 29, 1900.

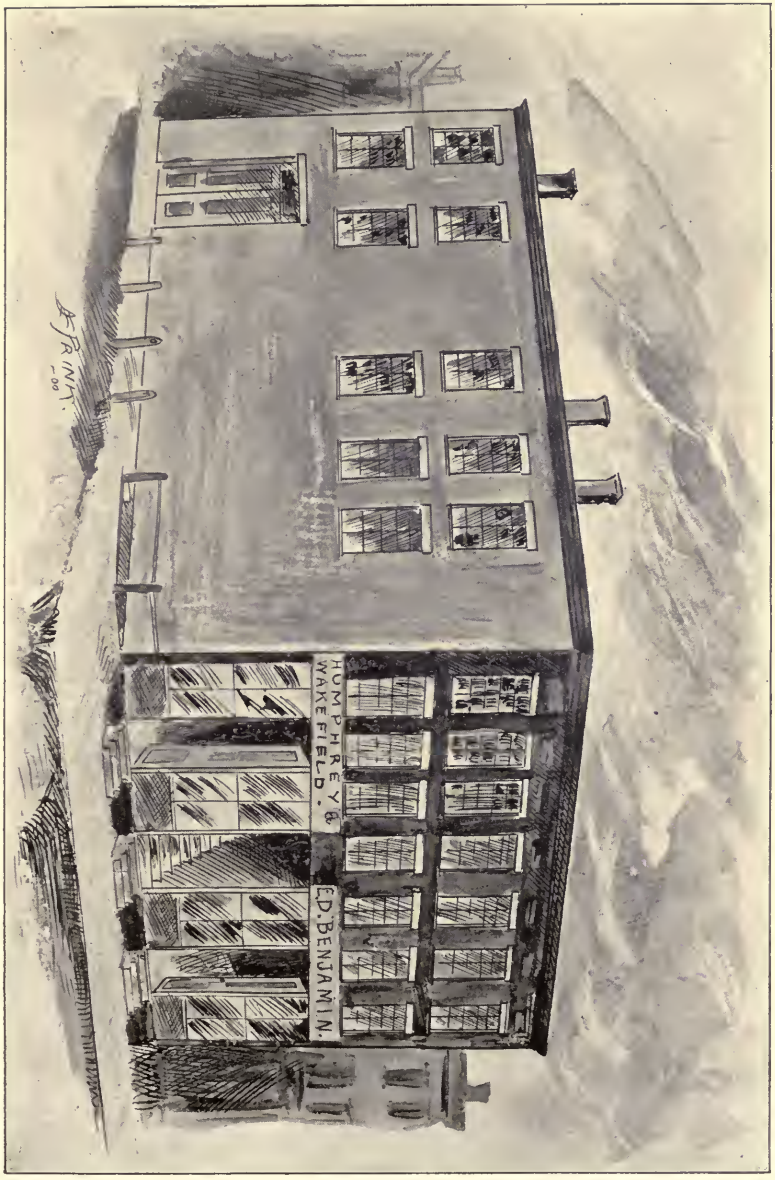
FOUNDING OF A PARTY.

The Major Hall Convention—The Birth of the Republican Organization in This City is Commemorated in a Fitting Manner—Social Reunion of Delegates—Associates of Abraham Lincoln Review the Work of a Political Gathering Held Forty-Four Years Ago.

Forty-four years ago yesterday was held in Bloomington a convention that is not only historic, but which helped to make the United States what it is today. At that time was born the great Republican party in Illinois, the party that has given a Lincoln, a Grant, a Logan, and a hundred other great names to history and to the world; a party which has caused the curse of slavery to be wiped off the face of our country and which has scored its triumphs on every page of history for nearly half a century.

It was in commemoration of this event that the McLean County Historical Society decided to hold a special meeting. Preparations have been going on for the past month and the result was yesterday made public at a meeting at the Unitarian church, which was attended by many of the delegates to this old time convention. The attendance was quite large, the majority being gray haired men and women, as was natural considering that the event to be celebrated took place forty-four years ago.

The building was well filled with people from abroad, with Bloomingtonians and with those from the more immediate vicinity. Outside the rain fell, the lightning flashed and the thunder's reverberations were often heard, but inside the church the people sat with bated breath and noiseless attention, while they listened to the aged speakers as they told of the trials and trouble of the beginning of the Republican party.—*Pantagraph* (Bloomington, Ill.), May 30, 1900.



MAJOR'S HALL 1856.

SOCIAL REUNION.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the day was the reunion held this morning in the lobby of the Windsor hotel. Here the convention of 1856 was conducted again. Gen. John M. Palmer who was the chairman of that body sat chatting with George Schneider, Paul Selby, Benjamin F. Shaw, Gen. Jas. M. Ruggles, Col. William Vocke, Gen. Thomas J. Henderson, David McWilliams, and other gray beards who are survivors of the convention of forty-four years ago today. In that group were several who occupied chairs just across the street in front of the old Pike House, now the Phoenix hotel, May 29, 1856, and discussed the business of the Major's hall convention. Little did they imagine what momentous consequences were to result from the proceedings of Major's hall. Lincoln, Oglesby, Wentworth, Yates and others who were there have gone, but hallowed in grateful and tender remembrance, their memory lives on till time shall be no more.

Reverently the name of the martyred president was recalled today. Incidents of his presence were told on every hand. A treasured relic brought from Chicago by Mr. Geo. Schneider was the picture of Lincoln taken in a Chicago restaurant in 1854. He was taking dinner with Mr. Schneider and while he was reading a copy of the *Chicago Democrat,* a photographer stepped in and asked permission to take Lincoln's picture and he consented. A copy of the photo was retained by Mr. Schneider and was viewed with deepest interest today.

Another interesting relic was a picture of the Union defense committee organized in Chicago just before the war to equip Illinois regiments for the field. This picture shows each member of the committee and was presented to the Historical Society by Mr. Schneider. There are but three members of the original committee surviving. Mr. Schneider, Thomas B. Bryan and A. H. Burley, all of Chicago.

It developed by comparing notes that the delegates selected by the Bloomington convention of 1856 to the national convention of Philadelphia, but two are living—General Palmer and George Schneider. Both were here today and the

latter had in his possession the original ticket of admission. He also had the ticket of admission to the national convention of 1860. These relics were also viewed with great attention and appealed strongly to the group of old gentlemen.

Of the group of Anti-Nebraska editors who met in convention in Decatur in February, 1856, to issue the call for the convention which met in Bloomington, the three survivors, Paul Selby and George Schneider, of Chicago and Benjamin F. Shaw, of Dixon, were here today. Selby at that time represented the *Jacksonville Journal,* Schneider the *Chicago Staats-Zeitung* and Shaw the *Dixon Telegraph,* with which he is still connected.

GENERAL JOHN M. PALMER

From army photograph taken in 1863. By permission and courtesy of the S. S. McClure Co.

The oldest man in attendance at the anniversary is General Palmer. He is 82. He has been in poor health of late and his paper will be read by another.* He came very near dying during the winter and looks far from well. His eyes lit up with the old fire, however, as he recalled the old days and there was enthusiasm in his voice as he told incidents of Lincoln and the great men of the early days.—*Bulletin,* May 29, 1900.

*The paper was, however, read by Gen. Palmer.

Introductory,

By Ezra M. Prince,
Secretary of the McLean County Historical Society.

To make plain to those who did not take part in the great anti-slavery contest this introductory note may not be inappropriate.

THE RISE OF THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

March 16, 1818, there was presented to the house of representatives a petition from Missouri for permission to form a state constitution. February 13, 1819, when the question came up before the house, an amendment was offered to the enabling act prohibiting the further introduction of slavery and providing that all children of slaves, born within the state after its admission should be free but might be held to service until the age of 25 years. March 6, 1820, a compromise having been affected under the leadership of Mr. Clay, the enabling act was passed without the anti-slavery restriction, but with the following amendment: "That in all the territory ceded by France to the United States under the name of Louisiana which lies north of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, north latitude, excepting only such part thereof as is included within the limits of the state contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude otherwise than in the punishment of crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted shall be and is hereby forever prohibited." This was known as the "Missouri compromise." The principle of this compromise, the supreme control of congress over the territory even in the regulation or abolition of slavery remained unquestioned for nearly thirty years and in popular estimation was held little less sacred than the constitution itself.

June 3, 1849, California formed a state constitution expressly prohibiting slavery but the senate of the United States refused to concur in the house bill providing for its admission into the Union. Mr. Clay again came forward with a

compromise, which in August and September, 1850, was finally effected as follows:

First; the admission of California with its constitution prohibiting slavery.

Second; organizing the territories of New Mexico and Utah, without any anti-slavery restriction.

Third; a very drastic fugitive slave law.

Fourth; abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

Fifth; the payment to Texas, of a large indemnity for the relinquishment of her claims to New Mexico.

In 1853 a bill was introduced in congress to organize the territory of Nebraska. January 16, 1854, Senator Dixon, of Kentucky, having given notice of an amendment abolishing the Missouri compromise in the case of Nebraska, the bill was recommitted to the committee on territories and Stephen A. Douglas, senator from Illinois, immediately reported a bill dividing the territory into two territories, the southern, adjoining Missouri on the west, called Kansas and the northern, adjoining Iowa on the west, called Nebraska and repealing the Missouri compromise in regard to slavery. This precipitated the inevitable conflict between slavery and freedom. It practically destroyed the Whig party. The anti-slavery sentiment of the north had grown gradually and the conviction had became general that there could be no lasting compromise with slavery. In the south the more aggressive and radical pro-slavery leaders gained control of the Democratic party and through it the complete domination of the south. In the north the repeal of the Missouri compromise caused great excitement. In 1854 when Senator Douglas returned to Chicago and attempted to justify his acts the people refused to hear him but for four hours yelled and hissed him until he retired from the meeting. In the condition of affairs here briefly outlined the Major's Hall convention met.

The Major's Hall convention was substantially the first state convention in Illinois in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri compromise. In 1854 an attempt was made by the

more advanced anti-slavery men of the state to organize a new party to resist the encroachment of the slave power. "September 9, 1854, a Republican county convention of the voters of McLean county was held at Bloomington to appoint delegates to a state convention to be held at Springfield at which the following were elected delegates to the state convention: Dr. R. O. Warinner, Dr. J. R. Freeze, Oliver Graves, A. B. Ives, N. N. Jones and W. F. M. Arny."

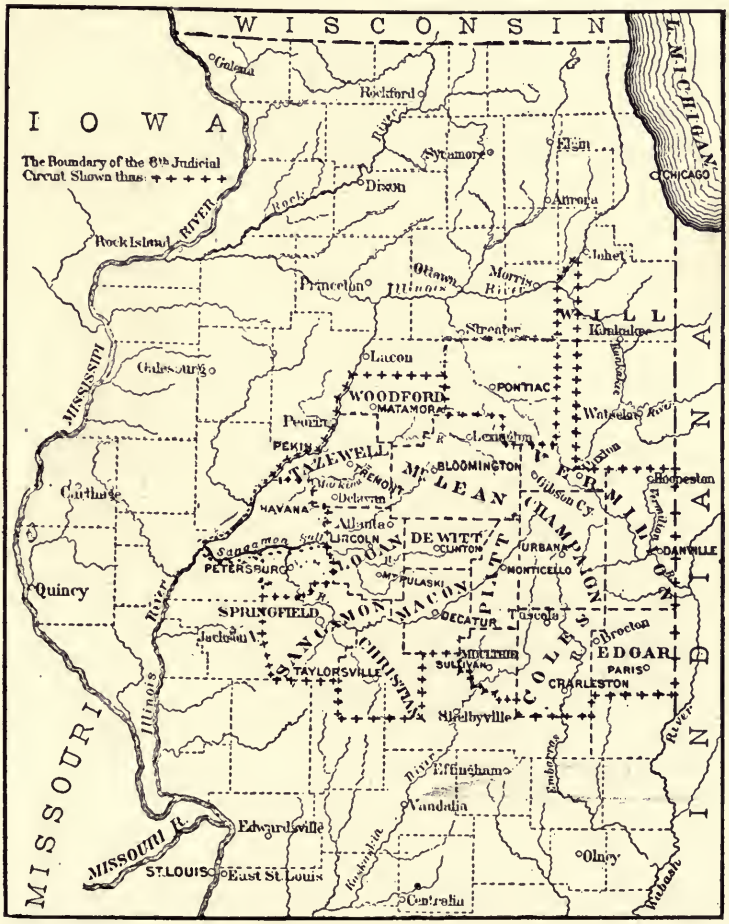
"The state convention to which these delegates were appointed, met at Springfield October 5, 1854. It was attended by only twenty-six delegates who were mostly abolitionists, Owen Lovejoy, Ichabod Codding and Erastus Wright having been the moving spirits. On the 5th of October it nominated John E. McClun, of McLean county, as candidate for state treasurer. In a short time the name of James Miller, of Bloomington, was substituted for that of Judge McClun." Burnham's History of Bloomington and Normal, p. 110.

The times were not yet ripe for a thorough organization of the anti-slavery sentiment of the state. In 1855 there was no state election in Illinois and of course no organization of the state. It was left for the Major's Hall convention to do that work.

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF ILLINOIS CIRCUIT.

This circuit, organized in 1847, consisted of fourteen counties in the east half of the central portion of the state, Sangamon, Tazewell, Woodford, McLean, Logan, DeWitt, Piatt, Champaign, Vermilion, Edgar, Shelby, Moultrie, Macon, and Christian. Session laws 1847, p. 31 The above is the eighth circuit as known to Mr. Lincoln's friends. In 1853 the circuit was reduced to Sangamon, Logan, McLean, Woodford, Tazewell, DeWitt, Champaign, and Vermilion. Session laws 1853, p. 63, and in 1857 it was still further reduced to DeWitt, Logan, McLean, Champaign, and Vermilion. Session laws 1857, p. 12. In this central belt of the state the waves of emigration from the north and south met and mingled. It was the debatable ground between the friends of freedom and those who were the friends of slavery or indifferent to its aggres-

sions. The northern part of the state was overwhelmingly anti-slavery, the southern as bitterly opposed to them. Which ever party won the center won the fight.



From its earliest history the bar of this circuit was exceptionally strong, in its earlier days including Edwin D. Baker, afterwards senator from Oregon, James A. McDougal, senator from California, Stephen A. Douglas, senator from Illinois, General Asahel Gridley of Bloomington, and Judge Stephen T. Logan of Springfield, whom Judge David Davis after a service of ten years as circuit judge, fifteen years

justice of the supreme court of the United States and six years as United States senator pronounced the ablest lawyer he had ever met. Many able lawyers from outside the circuit attended the courts, including Norman H. Purple of Peoria, formerly judge of the supreme court, T. L. Dickey of Ottawa, afterwards judge of the supreme court, Voorhees, afterwards senator from Indiana, and Usher, afterwards Secretary of the Interior, from Indiana. In every county were able, energetic young lawyers who had "gone west" to make their fortunes, such men as Adlai E. Stevenson, Richard J. Oglesby, Judges Lawrence Weldon, Anthony Thornton, Oliver L. Davis and John M. Scott. In each county of this large circuit two terms of court were held each year which Mr. Lincoln and the other leading lawyers of the circuit, Baker, McDougal, John T. Stuart, Logan, Leonard Swett and others regularly attended. Lincoln spent substantially half of each year on the circuit.

After Sangamon, Mr. Lincoln's home county, was attached to a new circuit, he continued to attend the eighth circuit up to the time of his nomination. He attended the spring term, 1860, of the McLean circuit only a few weeks before his nomination.

The relations between the court, lawyers, jurors and senators of the eighth circuit was peculiar, one that has long since passed away. The court was rather a big family consultation presided over by the judge than a modern court. Judge Davis personally knew a large portion of the people in the circuit. The jurors were then selected by the sheriff. In McLean and probably in the other counties, substantially the same jurors appeared from term to term, personal friends of Judge Davis, men of intelligence, sound judgment and integrity whose verdicts rarely had to be set aside. Court week was a holiday for the people of the county, political years there was always speaking at the court house, the parties using it on alternate nights. The people attended court to get the news, hear the speeches, listen to the exciting trials and do their trading. The lawyers and many of the jurors, witnesses and suitors stopped at the same tavern. There was a singular comrad-

DAVID DAVIS, Bloomington, Ill.

Born in Maryland, March 9, 1815; died June 26, 1886, jurist, U. S. Senator. See Volume I, Transactions McLean County Historical Society 320.
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ship of these attendants upon the court. Without the court at all losing its dignity, there was a freedom and familiarity as of old friends and acquaintances meeting upon a public occasion rather than the formality and dignity associated with the idea of a modern court. Often the judge's room, which sometimes was the only decent one in the tavern, was used evenings by the lawyers in their consultations without regard to the presence of the judge.

In several, perhaps all these counties, young lawyers who desired to avail themselves of Mr. Lincoln's popularity and who perhaps distrusted their own ability to prepare and try cases in the circuit court, arranged with Mr. Lincoln to allow them to advertise him as their partner. So there was Lincoln & Jones in this county and Lincoln & Smith in that; but the partnership was limited simply to Lincoln trying Smith & Jones cases, if they had any, and dividing fees with them. only this and nothing more. The only law partners, in the proper acceptance of that term, Mr. Lincoln ever had, were his Springfield partners, Col. John T. Stuart early in his legal career, and later William H. Herndon. Stuart was a very accomplished gentleman and lawyer, the chancery lawyer of the circuit, whose courts he always attended. Mr. Herndon never traveled the circuit.

Mr. Lincoln was always a great favorite with the court, lawyers and all attendants upon the court. The young and inexperienced lawyers received from him wise and timely advice and aid in their cases. The trial of cases was conducted almost entirely by these leaders of the circuit, Mr. Lincoln being on one side or the other of nearly every case tried. A crowd always gathered around him whether in court or elsewhere, expecting the never failing "story." The evenings were a contest of wits, for the pioneer lawyer always had a good story ready. These customs of the circuit made its leaders warm friends.

Around the eighth circuit grew up the influences that made Abraham Lincoln president of the United States.

At Bloomington were three men destined to exert a wide influence on Mr. Lincoln's career. Jesse W. Fell, Leonard

JESSE W. FELL, Normal, Ill.

Born in Pennsylvania 1808; died February 25, 1887. See Volume I, Transactions McLean County Historical Society, 338.

Swett and David Davis, all Whigs by previous party affiliation. Mr. Fell first seriously proposed Mr. Lincoln for president. Born in Chester county, Pennsylvania, of Quaker parentage, anti-slavery to the core, coming to McLean county in 1832, a young lawyer, he early abandoned the law and engaged in dealing in lands, entering 160 acres in Chicago and 320 in Milwaukee, one of the founders of the first newspaper and of the first public library in Bloomington, a horticulturist and arborculturist, planting 13,000 trees in Normal alone before a house was built there, an unrivaled politician, but always refusing office for himself. A lover of his fellow men, with a certain disinterestedness that always made him friends and withal possessing a remarkable organizing capacity. By his skill and unrivaled management he procured the location of the Normal University and the Soldiers' Orphans' Home at Normal. An idealist, yet a man of the greatest practical common sense. He and Lincoln were kindred spirits. He was secretary of the state Republican committee in 1858 during the memorable campaign between Lincoln and Douglas. In 1856 when Mr. Lincoln was obliged to decline the appointment of Illinois member of the Kansas national committee he recommended Mr. Fell to fill his place. He early conceived of Mr. Lincoln as the proper candidate for the presidency in 1860 and entered upon the accomplishment of that design with his usual energy and persistence. To him Mr. Lincoln addressed in December, 1859, his brief autobiography. By personal address, by correspondence and though the press at home and in other states he was unceasing in his advocacy of Mr. Lincoln. Leonard Swett, a native of the state of Maine, was the advocate of the west, tall, swarthy, handsome, with the most melodious voice man ever possessed. Mr. Fell by reason of his intelligence, earnestness, persistence and disinterestedness was singularly persuasive. Mr. Swett by the clearness of his mental conceptions, the melody of his voice, his geniality and eloquence was equally influential. Last but not least was David Davis, judge of the circuit court, a large and portly man of singular physical and mental quickness and energy, a native of Mary-

land and by temperament and education a conservative, he was profoundly attached to Mr. Lincoln and resisted all attempts to detach him from the political fortunes of his friend. As soon as he saw there was a possibility of Mr. Lincoln's nomination he threw himself into the movement with the whole force and weight of a strong personality. Each of these three men read their fellow men as they would read a book, instinctively perceiving their character, the motives and influences that would affect them. In the Chicago convention that nominated

LEONARD SWETT

Born at Turner, Maine in 1825, studied law, came west, served in Mexican War, Whig elector 1848, settled in Bloomington 1849 and became one of the ablest lawyers in the northwest, traveled the circuit with Mr. Lincoln and was one of his most trusted advisers during the Civil War. Died at Chicago, Illinois, June 8, 1889.

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Mr. Lincoln in 1860 their influence was most potent. Judge Davis by common consent took charge of the Lincoln forces. Davis, Fell and Swett were incessant in their labors, addressing delegations, laboring with individual delegates and caucusing and directing the contest and with the aid of Palmer, Yates and other earnest friends, won the victory.

The bar of the eighth circuit were hardworking men of the highest integrity, character and ability. Their influence upon Mr. Lincoln's career has never been properly recognized. We hope some one may write a paper fully treating of this subject.

E. M. PRINCE.

MEETING

OF THE

McLEAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UNITARIAN CHURCH

BLOOMINGTON, ILL., MAY 29, 1900

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE CONVENTION

HELD AT

MAJOR'S HALL, BLOOMINGTON, ILL., MAY 29, 1856

THAT ORGANIZED

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN ILLINOIS

PRESIDING:

GEORGE PERRIN DAVIS, President of the Historical Society.

SECRETARY:

EZRA M. PRINCE, Secretary of the Historical Society.

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS:

E. W. BLAISDELL.
JOHN H. BRYANT.
DR. ROBERT BOAL.
DR. WILLIAM JAYNE.
WILLIAM E. IVES.
J. M. RUGGLES.
W. P. KELLOGG.
J. E. WYNNE.
GEORGE SCHNEIDER.
GEORGE W. STIPP, Jr.
NATHANIEL NILES.
JOHN W. WAUGHOP.
THOMAS J. HENDERSON.
L. H. WALTERS.
DAVID MCWILLIAMS.

—Delegates to the Convention of May 29, 1856.

PROGRAM

9:00 A. M. WINDSOR HOTEL

Social Re-union of the Delegates to the Convention of May 29, 1856, and their friends.

2:00 P. M. AT UNITARIAN CHURCH.

Reading the call of the Convention of May 29, 1856.

Reading the roll of the Convention.

Welcome to the survivors of the Convention—Ex-Governor Joseph W. Fifer.

The Editoral Convention of February 22, 1856—Paul Selby, Chicago.

The Germans and German Press—Col. Wm. Vocke, Chicago.

Abraham Lincoln—John G. Nicolay, Washington, D. C.

8:00 P. M.

Lovejoy the Constitutional Abolitionists and the Republican Party—Benj. F. Shaw, Dixon.

The Whigs and Whig Leaders—I. L. Morrison, Jacksonville.

General Address—Gen. John M. Palmer, Springfield.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS

GEORGE P. DAVIS.
D. M. FUNK.
H. H. GREEN.
A. B. HOBLIT.
W. O. DAVIS.
SAIN WELTY.
C. P. SOPER.
LYMAN GRAHAM.
T. F. TIPTON.
GEORGE S. HANNA.
L. H. KERRICK.
J. W. FIFER.
DR. J. L. WHITE.
HENRY CAPEN.
O. T. REEVES.
T. C. KERRICK.
B. F. HOOPES.
R. M. BENJAMIN.
PETER WHITMER.
HENRY BEHR.
W. T. M. MILLER.

George Perrin Davis, president of the Historical Society, having called the meeting to order, said:

The McLean County Historical Society, knowing from their own experience how fatal delay is to historical accuracy, felt it proper to lay aside for the time being their labors on local affairs and bring together the surviving members of the most momentous convention ever held in this state, hoping, from the papers read and remarks of the delegates, much of interest to the state and nation might be rescued from the memory of individuals and put in enduring form for our descendants. The papers have all been prepared by men familiar with the branch of the subject treated by them.

The secretary will read the call for the convention of May 29, 1856, which was read as follows:

ANTI-NEBRASKA STATE CONVENTION.

A state convention of the Anti-Nebraska party of Illinois will be held in the city of Bloomington on Thursday, the 29th day of May, 1856, for the purpose of choosing candidates for state officers, appointing delegates to the national convention and transacting such other business as may properly come before the body. The committee have adopted as the basis of representation the ratio of one delegate to every 6,000 inhabitants and one additional delegate for every fractional number of 2,000 and over but counties that have less than 6,000 inhabitants are entitled to one delegate. W. B. Ogden, S. M. Church, E. A. Dudley, Thomas J. Pickett, R. J. Oglesby, G. D. A. Parks, Ira O. Wilkinson, W. H. Herndon, Joseph Gillespie, State Central Committee.

The secretary then read the roll of the delegates to the convention of May 29, 1856, to which the following answered present:

General John M. Palmer, Benjamin F. Shaw, Dr. William Jayne, J. M. Ruggles, George Schneider, Thomas J. Henderson and David McWilliams.

Address of Welcome.

By Joseph W. Fifer.

Fellow Citizens: It is generally understood, I believe, that this celebration is held under the auspices of the McLean County Historical Society. Through the courtesy of the officers of that association, it becomes my gracious privilege to say a few words of welcome upon this most interesting occasion.

Friends, we are here to celebrate one of the most important events in history. Here in this city forty-four years ago today, was held our first republican state convention. It was the first organized opposition within the limits of our state to the further spread of human slavery, and the cause of liberty found here many of its ablest advocates, among whom were David Davis, Jesse W. Fell and Isaac Funk.

In a short address of welcome I cannot of course, enter upon any full discussion of the causes which led to that convention; nor will the proprieties of this occasion permit me to speak at length of the historic events that soon followed.

In that assembly were gathered our ablest and most conscientious statesmen. They came from all political parties, and were united in the single purpose to resist at any cost the further aggressions of slavery. It was not a time for the success of busy little men, and therefore not a demagogue was to be found in their midst. They were men of noble purpose and high courage; men who believed that right makes might, and consequently were not afraid to shake their fists in the face of majorities.

The movement here inaugurated under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln, Richard Yates, John M. Palmer, Benjamin

Joseph W. Fifer was born at Staunton, Va., Oct. 28, 1840; came to McLean Co., Ill., 1857; enlisted private, Co. C, 33d Ill. Vols. Aug. 15, 1861; severely wounded at Jackson, Miss., July 13, 1863; discharged Oct. 11, 1864; entered Illinois Wesleyan University and graduated 1868; studied law and was successively city attorney of Bloomington, state's attorney for McLean county, state senator, and governor of Illinois, and is now member of interstate commerce commission.

JOSEPH W. FIFER.

Shaw and others, was not destined to have an easy or a bloodless victory. In its cause we piled up a national debt of nearly $3,000,000,000. In the bloody conflict that ensued five hundred thousand American citizens laid down their lives counting those on both sides. After this unparalleled sacrifice of blood and treasure, the doctrines here proclaimed finally triumphed with Grant at Appomattox. The chains were all broken, the auction block for the sale of human beings, was forever banished from the land, and today, thank God, the foot of no slave presses the soil of the continents discovered by Columbus.

No human sagacity could see the end from the beginning. A movement undertaken for the purpose of enforcing wise restrictions against the spread of slavery, finally, through the irresistible logic of events, resulted in the total removal of that foul blot from our national escutcheon.

It is only just to say that this happy result was achieved, not by the efforts of any single political party, for slavery was abolished and the union preserved by the common patriotism of the great American people; and men of all shades of political belief now applaud the wisdom and courage of the convention held here near a half century ago. Instead of sectional strife and discord, we now behold a nation of 70,000,000 of people, with happy homes, and with a trade and commerce that covers all the seas; a people, too, that are forever united in the bonds of friendship under a single flag. And so the prophecy of 1861 has been fulfilled. "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be by the better angels of our nature."

Possibly most of the men who stood with Lincoln in that historic convention, are now in their graves. Some are still living, and some we have with us here today. We thank them all, both the living and the dead for their patriotism, and for their noble example of unselfish devotion to the cause of truth

and justice. One of their number was afterwards elected president of the United States, and as he lay upon his bloody bier, Secretary Stanton could point to him and truthfully say "there lies the greatest leader of men that ever lived." Many others became distinguished, both in civic and in military life, and rendered honorable and conspicuous service to the nation.

The distinguished chairman of the convention, we are glad to know, is present with us here today. Of his patriotic services to his country in the darkest hour this nation ever saw, time will not allow me to speak. In the cause of liberty he was no laggard; he early heard the call of duty and nobly risked his life for the integrity of the Union and the glory and honor of his country. The memory of his sacrifices will remain fresh so long as patriotism and courage are appreciated and admired by a grateful people.

My friends, the event you celebrate today is very close to the hearts of our people. We appreciate your presence here, and with the hope that your meeting may prove both pleasant and profitable, I take great pleasure in extending to you on behalf of the people of Bloomington and of McLean county, a most sincere and cordial welcome.

The Editorial Convention, February 22, 1856.

Pres. Davis:

One of the most important factors in establishing the Republican party was the Anti-Nebraska press. The convention which we celebrate was called by a meeting of Anti-Nebraska editors held at Decatur, February 22, 1856, presided over by Paul Selby, of the *Morgan Journal*, of Jacksonville. He was also a member of the Anti-Nebraska State Convention held in October, 1854, at Springfield. He has been connected with many of the papers of this state, but mainly with the *State Journal* of Springfield, for eighteen years.

He has held many offices of trust and profit, and for the past ten years has lived in Chicago and been engaged in literary and historical work.

Our next paper is on "The Editorial Convention of February 22, 1856." I have the pleasure of introducing Hon. Paul Selby.

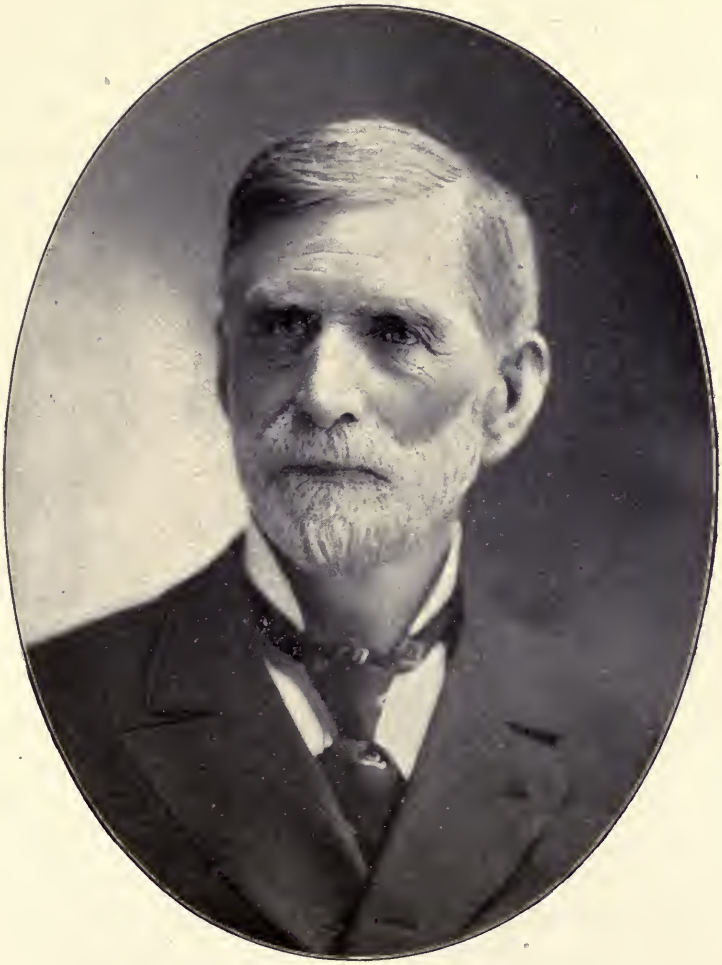
PAUL SELBY, OF CHICAGO,

President of that Convention.

The task assigned me today is the presentation before your society of the "inside history" of the Convention of Anti-Nebraska Editors held at Decatur, Illinois, February 22, 1856, and this duty I shall endeavor to discharge with as much brevity as circumstances will allow. The theme being strictly historical, you will expect no displays of either rhetoric or oratory, but I shall confine myself to a narrative of facts, which I hope may prove of value to your society and of interest to the investigators of history generally.

It is a fact well known to all familiar with the political history of the time, that the decade following the year 1846 was one of intense political excitement and constantly increasing agitation. Beginning with the annexation of Texas,

Paul Selby, editor, was born in Pickaway county, Ohio, July 20, 1825. In 1852 he became the editor of the *Morgan Journal*, of Jacksonville, Illinois, with which he remained until the fall of 1858, covering the period of the organization of the Republican party in which the *Journal* took an active part. He was a member of the republican Illinois State convention of 1854, was chairman of the Anti-Nebraska Editorial convention of February 22, 1856. Was associate editor of *Journal* at Springfield, Illinois, from July 1862 to November 1865. Afterwards on the staff of the *Chicago Journal*, also on the *Republican* from May 1868, to January 1874. Was editor of the *Quincy Whig* and in 1874 became editor of the *Springfield Journal*. Was postmaster at Springfield from 1880 to 1886. With Newton Bateman as editor of the Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois.



Paul Selby

which marked an immense expansion in the area of slave territory, the growth of this excitement was temporarily checked by the diversion of the popular mind from the great issue, by the advent of the Mexican War on the one hand, and the admission of California as a free state on the other, with the virtual exclusion of slavery from the territory acquired from Mexico under operation of the compromise measures of 1850. But even these were not sufficient to counterbalance the intense feeling produced by the harsh features of the fugitive slave law, which constituted a leading feature of that celebrated series of acts—the last compromise with which the name of Henry Clay was associated. The hostility to this act, which manifested itself in many sections of the north in open resistance to the return of fugitive slaves to their southern masters, and systematic efforts made in certain northern states to neutralize the law and thwart its enforcement by the enactment of state laws, gave evidence of the constantly rising tide of public sentiment on this subject at this time.

The very climax of conditions tending to promote agitation of the slavery question was reached in the approval, by the president, on May 30, 1854, of the Kansas-Nebraska bill repealing the Missouri Compromise and thereby removing the restriction against the introduction of slavery into territory north of the parallel of 36 degrees and 30 minutes. There is a curious coincidence in the fact that, while one Illinois senator (Jesse B. Thomas) was accredited with the introduction, in 1820, of the measure which took the name of the "Missouri Compromise," as was then believed in the interest of slavery, another Illinois senator (Stephen A. Douglas), thirty-four years later, in compliance with the demands of the friends of slavery, introduced, and pushed to a successful issue, the act which accomplished the repeal of that measure. Yet this was not accomplished until five years after the author of the repealing measure had spoken of the act which he was about to destroy, as having "an origin akin to that of the constitution," and as having become "canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand

would ever be reckless enough to disturb." And it fell to the lot of another Illinoisan (Abraham Lincoln) not only to lead the forces which put an effectual check upon the further spread of slavery, but to give vitality to the act which was to wipe the institution out of existence.

The condition of political affairs existing throughout the nation between 1854 and 1856 was one of practical chaos. It was a period of unrest and commotion such as the country had not seen since the adoption of the constitution, and which was only surpassed by the agitation which attended the outbreak of the Civil War seven years later, of which it was the precursor. Parties were disintegrating and their mutually repellant elements were seeking new associations. Anti-slavery Democrats and anti-slavery Whigs were found in sympathy and alliance with each other, while the pro-slavery factions of both parties were drifting in a similar manner towards a common center. By "anti-slavery" in this connection I do not mean those who had espoused the cause of practical "abolition," or even those who were known as "Free Soilers," but those who objected to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and were opposed to the introduction of slavery in territory already free, or which had been dedicated to freedom by that most solemn of compacts.

In nearly every community during this period, especially in the more densely populated portions of the northern states and among the more intelligent classes, were groups of men gathered from both of the old parties, as well as avowed Abolitionists and Free-Soilers, who were accustomed to meet and anxiously confer together over the political situation. This was especially the case in the city of Jacksonville, my home at that time—a college town which embraced among its population many families of eastern origin, or those from education, association or natural impulse, in sympathy with the spirit of freedom. Among those who held advanced views on the subject of slavery, I may mention the names of the late Prof. Jonathan B. Turner, President Julian M. Sturtevant, of Illinois college, Dr. Samuel Adams, of the same institution, Elihu

Wolcott, Hon. Richard Yates, Drs. David Prince and Hiram K. Jones (the latter still surviving and now a professor in Illinois college), and among business men or those not engaged in the professions, John Mathers, J. W. and J. O. King, J. H. Bancroft, J. W. Lathrop, Peter Melendy, Anderson Foreman, and many others. There was a widespread, an almost universal, demand among this class and their sympathizers throughout the nation, for the organization of a new party based upon resistance to the further extension of slavery, a chief incentive being found in the wrongs and outrages perpetrated in the effort to plant that institution in Kansas, following immediately upon the congressional legislation of 1854.

It was my fortune at this time to be the editor of *"The Morgan* (now Jacksonville) *Journal,"* originally a Whig paper, but which, on taking charge of it early in 1852—foreseeing, as I believed, the impending disruption of parties—had been made "independent." On the enactment of the Nebraska bill, however, it promptly took ground in opposition to that measure. As the result of a conference with my partner, Mr. Alvah C. Clayton—for many years past the proprietor of a printing house in St. Louis and now a resident of Webster Groves, near that city—about the holidays in December, 1855, *"The Journal"* published an editorial suggesting a meeting of the Anti-Nebraska Editors of the state for the purpose of agreeing upon a line of policy to be pursued in the campaign of the year then just opening. Owing to the destruction of the files of *"The Journal"* of that period by fire, I am unable to quote the article referred to, or even give its exact date. The following quotation from the *Chicago Tribune,* published a few weeks before the date of the convention, will indicate the tenor of the article, as well as its origin:

"FREE-STATE EDITORIAL CONVENTION."

"It was moved by *The Morgan Journal* and seconded by *The Winchester Chronicle,* that there be held a convention of Free State Editors at Decatur on the 22d of February. The question has met the approval of the *Pike County Free Press, Decatur Chronicle* and other papers. *The Morgan Journal*

calls on *The Alton Courier, Democrat* (of Chicago), *Democratic Press, Tribune, Journal* and *Staats Zeitung,* of Chicago; the *Springfield Journal* and the *Belleville Advocate,* and the Anti-Nebraska press generally, from one end of the prairie state to the other, to express their sentiments on the propriety of the proposed convention."

Then follow quotations upon the subject from *The Pike County Free Press* and *The Morgan Journal,* after which the *Tribune* concludes its indorsement of the proposition as follows:

"The reasons set forth by *The Journal* so clearly and well, are sufficient. If it be the will of the Free State Editors of Illinois to hold such a convention, the *Tribune* will be represented. We need only add that the proposition meets our cordial approbation, and we hope a ready response will be heard from every section of the great prairie state on the part of the editorial corps not bound to swear in the words of Douglas and slavery."

The *Winchester Chronicle,* which was the first to second the proposition of *The Morgan Journal,* was, as I think, then under the editorial charge of the late Judge John Moses, who later was secretary for a number of years of the Chicago Historical Society and author of Moses' History of Illinois. *The Decatur Chronicle,* then edited by W. J. Usrey, was an early indorser of the movement, and, at its suggestion, Decatur was named as the place of meeting, and accepted by common consent. A call in the following form was printed in the papers indorsing the proposition:

"EDITORIAL CONVENTION."

"All editors in Illinois opposed to the Nebraska bill are requested to meet in convention at Decatur, Illinois, on the 22d of February next, for the purpose of making arrangements for the organization of the Anti-Nebraska forces in this state for the coming contest. All editors favoring the movement will please forward a copy of their paper containing their approval to the office of *The Illinois State Chronicle,* Decatur."

According to my best information, obtained by consulting the files of papers which took part in the movement, it received the formal indorsement of twenty-five, representing nearly the

entire strength of the Anti-Nebraska press of the state at that time. Those whose names were appended to the call as avowed supporters of the proposition were:

The Morgan Journal, Jacksonville.
The Chronicle, Winchester.
The Illinois State Chronicle, Decatur.
The Quincy Whig, Quincy.
The Pike County Free Press, Pittsfield.
The Gazette, Lacon.
The Tribune, Chicago.
The Staats Zeitung, Chicago.
The Republican, Oquawka.
The Republican, Peoria.
The Prairie State, Danville.
The Advertiser, Rock Island.
The Fultonian, Vermont, Fulton County.
The Journal (German), Quincy.
The Beacon, Freeport.
The Pantagraph, Bloomington.
The True Democrat, Joliet.
The Telegraph, Lockport.
The Gazette, Kankakee.
The Guardian, Aurora.
The Gazette, Waukegan.
The Chronicle, Peru.
The Advocate, Belleville.
The Journal, Chicago.
The Journal, Sparta.

Others may have indorsed the movement, but their names were not appended to the call as published up to the date of the convention. The proposition was ignored by the *Chicago Democrat* and the *Democratic Press,* though they afterwards indorsed the call for the Bloomington convention and supported its nominees.

The convention met at the time and place indicated in the call, convening in the parlor of what was then the "Cassell House"—afterwards the "Oglesby House," but now known as the "St. Nicholas Hotel." Of those who had indicated their purpose to participate in the movement, a round dozen put in an appearance and took part in the proceedings, while two or three others arrived later in the day. A severe snow storm, which fell the night before, blockaded many of the railroads, especially in the northern part of the state, and prevented the arrival of a number who had intended to be present. The early arrivals included Dr. Charles H. Ray of the *Tribune*, and George Schneider of the *Staats Zeitung,* Chicago; V. Y. Ralston, of the *Quincy Whig;* O. P. Wharton, of the *Rock Island Advertiser;* T. J. Pickett, of the *Peoria Republican;* E. C. Daugherty, of the *Register* and E. W. Blaisdell, of the *Republican,* Rockford; Charles Faxon, of the

Princeton Post; A. N. Ford, of the *Lacon Gazette;* B. F. Shaw, of the *Dixon Telegraph;* W. J. Usrey, of the *Decatur Chronicle* and Paul Selby of the *Morgan Journal.* An organization was effected with Paul Selby as chairman and Mr. Usrey as secretary, while, according to the official report, Messrs. Ray, Schneider, Ralston, Wharton, Daugherty and Pickett were appointed a committee on resolutions, and Messrs. Faxon, Ford and Shaw on credentials.

The most important work of the convention was transacted through the medium of the committee on resolutions. Mr. Lincoln came up from Springfield and was in conference with the committee during the day, and there is reason to believe that the platform, reported by them through Dr. Ray as their chairman, and adopted by the convention, bears the stamp of his peculiar intellect. A copy of this document, embraced in the official report of the proceedings of the convention, I shall deposit with this paper for such use as your association may see proper to make of it.

The platform, while disavowing any intention to interfere in the internal affairs of any state in reference to slavery, reduced to its first elements, amounted to an emphatic protest against the introduction of slavery into territory already free, or its further extension; demanded the restoration of the Missouri Compromise; insisted upon the maintenance of the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence as essential to freedom of speech and of the press, and that, under it, "Freedom" should be regarded "as the rule and slavery the exception, made and provided for as such—and that it nowhere recognizes property in man as one of its principles;" declared in favor of the widest toleration in matters of religion and for the protection of the common school system—which was a protest against "Know-Nothingism" which had swept over the country within the preceding two years—and concluded with a demand for "reform in the administration of the state government" as second only in importance to the slavery-extension itself. This last declaration had an impressive significance given to it, just three years later, in the exposure of

the "canal scrip fraud" which furnished a scandalous sequel to the administration of Gov. Matteson, then occupying the gubernatorial chair. The platform, as a whole, amounted to a declaration of the most conservative Republicanism, and the foresight of its authors was indicated by the reiteration of every feature of it, in subsequent years, in the utterances of state and national conventions of the party. Without disparagement to any, it is safe to say that Dr. Charles H. Ray and Mr. George Schneider were controlling factors in framing the platform—the former in conjunction with Mr. Lincoln in the clear enunciation of the principles of the new party on the subject of slavery, and the latter as the faithful representative of the German Anti-Nebraska element in his championship of religious tolerance and the maintenance of the naturalization laws as they were, as against the demand for the exclusion of persons of foreign-birth from the rights of American citizenship.

Not less important than the platform, and possibly even more far-reaching in its effects, was the following, which was adopted as an independent resolution:

"*Resolved*, That this convention recommend a state delegate convention to be held on Thursday, the 29th day of May next, in the city of Bloomington, and that the state central committee be requested to fix the ratio of representation for that convention, and take such steps as may seem desirable to bring about a full representation from the whole state."

The adoption of this resolution had been preceded by the appointment of a state central committee embracing the following names:

First district, S. M. Church, Rockford.
Second district, W. B. Ogden, Chicago.
Third district, G. D. A. Parks, Joliet.
Fourth district, T. J. Pickett, Peoria.
Fifth district, Edward A. Dudley, Quincy.
Sixth district, W. H. Herndon, Springfield.
Seventh district, R. J. Oglesby, Decatur.
Eighth district, Joseph Gillespie, Edwardsville.
Ninth district, D. L. Phillips, Jonesboro.

For the state-at-large: Gustavus Koerner, Belleville, and Ira O. Wilkinson, Rock Island.

The day's proceedings ended with a banquet given in the evening to the editors in attendance on the convention and a number of invited guests, by the citizens of Decatur at the Cassell House. By this time there had been two or three arrivals of belated editors. Those whom I remember distinctly were Simeon Whitely, of the *Aurora Guardian*, and Edward L. Baker, of the *State Journal*, Springfield. The local committee having the matter of the banquet in charge consisted of Capt. Isaac C. Pugh, during the Civil War colonel of the Forty-first Illinois volunteers; Dr. H. C. Johns, who died at Decatur a few weeks ago, and Major. E. O. Smith. Richard J. Oglesby, then a young lawyer, presided and made the welcoming address. Several of the editors made speeches, but, of course, the principal speech of the evening was made by Mr. Lincoln. In response to a suggestion, by one of the editors present, of his name as a candidate for governor, Mr. Lincoln illustrated his characteristic unselfishness and sagacity by advocating the nomination of an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, on the ground that such a nomination would be more available than that of an old-line Whig like himself, finally naming Col. William H. Bissell for the place—a suggestion that was carried into effect at Bloomington in May, with the very result in November following that he then predicted.

The men named upon the central committee all acted in that capacity with three exceptions. These were W. B. Ogden, who declined on account of the demands of business requiring his absence from the state, his place being filled by Dr. John Evans, who afterwards became the territorial governor of Colorado by appointment of Mr. Lincoln; R. J. Oglesby left the state for a tour through Europe and the Holy Land, his place being filled by Col. I. C. Pugh, of Decatur, and Governor Koerner (then serving as lieutenant governor under the Democratic administration of Governor Matteson) doubted whether the time had arrived for the organization of a new party, and so declined, his place being left vacant. Thus

changed, the committee issued its call for a "State Convention of the Anti-Nebraska party of Illinois," naming May 29, as the date and Bloomington as the place, as designated by the convention at Decatur.

Thus it was that, on the 124th anniversary of the "Father of His Country," with the aid and counsel of the man who was to become its Preserver amid the greatest perils that had ever assailed it from the foundation of the government, this little band of Anti-Nebraska editors enunciated the doctrines which were to be accepted as the foundation principles of the new party, organized and manned the machinery, and set it in motion in the direction of victory. And yet there was not a man of them who felt he was doing more than any other member of the incipient party was ready to do. The time was ripe for the movement; its spirit was in the minds of thousands, and if that little gathering at Decatur had not taken the initiative, others would have done so and the same result would have been achieved at last. In the language of one of the naval heroes of the Spanish-American War, there was "honor enough for all."

A brief word as to the personal history of the members of the Decatur convention: Ralston, of the *Quincy Whig,* after serving as captain in an Illinois regiment and, later, in an Iowa regiment, died in a hospital in St. Louis in 1864; Dr. Charles H. Ray spent the last three years of his life as editor of the *Chicago Evening Post,* dying in that city in 1870; T. J. Pickett was engaged in newspaper work in Nebraska for a number of years, dying at Ashland in that state in 1891; A. N. Ford died at an advanced age at Lacon in 1892; W. J. Usrey's life career was ended at Decatur in 1894; Daugherty retired from business on account of declining health in 1865 and died not long after—the exact date I am unable to give; Faxon spent some time after the war in government employment in Washington City, dying, as I think, in that city, date unknown; Whitely, after being employed in some government position among the Indians, turned his attention to insurance business at Racine, Wisconsin, where he died about

1890; E. L. Baker served nearly twenty-four years as United States consul at Buenos Ayres, dying there in 1897 as the result of injuries received in a railroad accident. So far as known the following still survive: George Schneider, Chicago; E. W. Blaisdell, Rockford; B. F. Shaw, of *The Telegraph,* Dixon; O. P. Wharton, editor of *The Daily Journal and Local,* of Sandusky, Ohio, and the author of this record.

There is a coincidence of no small interest in the fact that, on the same day the conference of Anti-Nebraska editors of Illinois was in progress at Decatur, a similar body of representatives from the various states was in session at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, called together in a similar manner, "for the purpose of perfecting the national organization and providing for a national delegate convention of the Republican party to nominate candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency."

Among those present at the Pittsburg meeting we find such names as Francis P. Blair, of Maryland (its permanent president); Gov. Edwin D. Morgan, Preston King and Horace Greeley, of New York; Judge E. R. Hoar, of Massachusetts; Oliver P. Morton and George W. Julian, of Indiana; Zachariah Chandler, K. S. Bingham and Jacob M. Howard, of Michigan; Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio; David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania; Owen Lovejoy and J. C. Vaughan, of Illinois, and many more of national reputation. Out of this latter meeting came the call for the national convention at Philadelphia on the 17th of June, 1856, which put in nomination John C. Fremont for the presidency. It will thus be seen that the new party, which perfected its organization in this city of Bloomington on the 29th day of May, 1856, started out in its career abreast of the national organization itself.

The call for the Bloomington convention, as issued by the state central committee appointed at Decatur, provided for a total representation of 226 delegates, ranging from one for each of the smaller counties, to seventeen from Cook. When the convention came together, however, owing to the deep interest manifested in some of the counties of the state resulting in a large attendance of outsiders, and the unanimity

which prevented the introduction of controversial issues, it seems to have resolved itself into something like a "mass meeting," and, although some thirty counties, chiefly in the southern part of the state, were wholly unrepresented, the number of delegates whose names got upon the roll, as published in the papers at the time, amounted to about 270. Of these Lee county furnished 25, while the little county of Morgan came next with 20. I was not present in the convention, although appointed a delegate and entitled to be there. It will be remembered that the popular argument of some of the most zealous opponents of our new party organization, at that time, was comprised in the bludgeon and the pistol. On the Monday preceding the meeting of the convention, while on the way from my office to the hotel at which I boarded, I was assaulted upon the street by a bevy of political enemies—one of them, whom I had no reason to suspect of personal hostility, stealing behind to pinion my arms while his confederates closed around me. The injuries which they were thus able to inflict prevented my attendance upon the convention, but made no converts for their cause. The country was even then ringing with the report of the ruffianly assault upon Charles Sumner in the senate chamber at Washington, which had occurred just four days previous; but the name of Sumner lives in history while that of his assailant has passed into practical oblivion.

And now, having, in compliance with the request made of me, presented before you this plain unvarnished record; having traced the genealogy of the Bloomington convention of 1856, and proved its legitimacy of descent from that little editorial conference at Decatur on February 22, previous—having led you, so to speak, to the doors of the historic convocation in this city—I leave to others to admit you to its deliberations, to report upon its acts and portray the personal characteristics of the men whose presence here marked an era in your history and that of the state and the nation, and to describe those great events which, through the agency of a Lincoln, a Yates, a Lovejoy, a Grant and other Illinoisans, many of whom participated in the deliberations of that assem-

blage and, acting in harmony and association with the patriots and heroes of the whole Union, changed the destiny of the Republic and made it the home of freemen instead of "half slave and half free." In this result we see not only the verification of the marvelous prediction of Abraham Lincoln on the evening of June 17, 1858, but a vindication of the principles enunciated and the policy indorsed in that little convocation at Decatur, and incorporated in positive action by its successor at Bloomington, on May 29, 1856.

Republican State Convention, Springfield, Ill., October 4-5, 1854.

BY PAUL SELBY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

At the risk of going outside the record and digressing from the strict purpose of this reunion, I ask your indulgence while I make mention of the earliest attempt to organize a party in this state on the basis which finally became the foundation of the Republican party. I do this in no spirit of partisanship, however, and with less compunction because it is a part of the history of the times which we are here to commemorate, and citizens of Bloomington were prominent figures in the movement. This undertaking took the form of a "mass convention," so-called, announced to be held in the city of Springfield, October 4, 1854, a few months after the passage of the Nebraska bill by congress. The date and place were chosen because the second annual fair of the Illinois State Agricultural Society was to occur there during the same week, and the occasion was deemed most favorable for securing a respectable attendance.

It fell to my lot to be one of five delegates (I think) from Morgan county, one of the others being Dr. Hiram K. Jones, now a member of the faculty of Illinois College at Jacksonville. When we came together we found that not only had no arrangement been made for a place of meeting, but that the hall

of representatives was occupied by Senator Douglas and others in that memorable debate in which he first met Abraham Lincoln in the discussion of the principles of the Nebraska bill. Among those who espoused Douglas' side of the question were James W. Singleton and John Calhoun, the latter afterwards known as "John Candle-box Calhoun," on account of his connection with the alleged frauds in the attempt to impose the Lecompton Constitution upon the people of Kansas. Lyman Trumbull and Abraham Lincoln were Douglas' principal antagonists, although Judge Sidney Breese and the late Col. E. D. Taylor, of Chicago, took the same side, though later found in cooperation with the Democratic party. This debate marked the beginning of both Trumbull's and Lincoln's careers as leaders of the new party, and ante-dated only a few months the contest for United States senatorship, which resulted in favor of the former.

Between the debates of the afternoon, when Douglas and Trumbull spoke, and the evening when Lincoln replied to the former, we managed to get together long enough to effect a temporary organization and appoint a committee on resolutions when an adjournment was taken to the following day. The late A. G. Throop, then of Chicago, but who died a few years since at Pasadena, California, was chosen chairman, while Owen Lovejoy, Ichabod Codding and the late Gen. John F. Farnsworth were leading spirits upon the floor. The committee on resolutions consisted of N. C. Geer, of Lake county; John T. Morse, of Woodford; Erastus Wright, of Sangamon; Dr. H. K. Jones, of Morgan; Bronson Murray, of LaSalle (for many years past a resident of New York City); S. M. Coe, of Whiteside; T. B. Hurlbut, of Madison; William Butler, of Lee; Jesse Penrose, of Whiteside, and Dr. Henry Wing, of Madison. They met in the evening in the dingy office of Erastus Wright, one of their number and a leading anti-slavery man of Springfield, and transacted their business by the light of one or two tallow candles.

A place of meeting was found for the convention on the second day in the old senate chamber, and, although its num-

bers had been increased somewhat by new arrivals, the space was ample. The committee reported a conservative platform, one of its chief features being embraced in the two following resolutions:

"*Resolved,* That, as freedom is national and slavery sectional and local, the absence of all law upon the subject of slavery presumes the existence of a state of *freedom alone,* while slavery exists only by virtue of positive law."

"4. That slavery can exist in a Territory only by usurpation and in violation of law, and we believe that congress has the right and should prohibit its extension into such Territory, so long as it remains under the guardianship of the general government."

The platform was adopted and the Hon. John E. McClun, of Bloomington, was nominated for state treasurer,—the only office to be filled by election that year. Later Mr. McClun gave place to James Miller, also of Bloomington, who had received a nomination for the same office from a Whig convention, and who came within less than 3,000 votes of election. His successful opponent was Hon. John Moore, also a citizen of Bloomington. Two years later Miller was the nominee of both the Republican and the American parties and was elected by over 20,000 majority.

The remaining principal business transacted by this convention was the appointment of a state central committee, consisting of David J. Baker, of Madison county, (father of the late Justice D. J. Baker, of the supreme court); N. D. Coy, of Knox; N. C. Geer, of Lake; A. G. Throop, of Cook; E. S. Leland, of LaSalle; M. L. Dunlap, of Cook; Abraham Lincoln, of Sangamon; H. M. Sheets, of Stephenson; Zebina Eastman, of Cook; John F. Farnsworth, of Kane; J. B. Fairbanks, of Morgan, and Ichabod Codding, of Cook. This committee never formally organized and faded out of existence. Mr. Lincoln took no part in the convention and, according to Herndon, absented himself from the city on the second day, going to Tazewell county in order that he might not be identified with it. He still had hope that the Clay-Whigs —the party of his first love—would take ground against the Nebraska bill, and,

when notified by Codding of his appointment on the state central committee, declined to recognize the right of the convention to use his name in that connection.

The attempt has been made in some quarters to depreciate the importance of this convention by minimizing the numbers in attendance and representing that it was "called and managed by extremists." While it is true that such men as Owen Lovejoy and Ichabod Codding—known as uncompromising anti-slavery men—were leading spirits in the convention, the conservative character of the platform adopted is a conclusive answer to the charge of fanaticism. This went no farther than a distinct declaration of opposition to extension of slavery into free territory, which became the essence of Republicanism two years later. When, on the proposition to place the name of Mr. Lincoln on the list of members of the state central committee, the question was raised whether he was in sympathy with the views maintained by the convention, I have a distinct recollection that Owen Lovejoy, in emphatic terms, vouched for his fidelity to the principles enunciated in our platform. And, while Mr. Lincoln then cherished the hope that his beloved Whig party would finally range itself in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the principles of the Nebraska bill, he and Lovejoy were found contending for the same principle before the convention in this city in 1856, and, in the presidential chair, he had no more zealous champion and loyal supporter than the brother of the Alton martyr.

The Chicago *Daily Democrat*, edited by the late John Wentworth, in its issue of November 2, 1860, four days before the election of Lincoln to the presidency, after giving the history of this convention substantially as I have given it here, says:

"Such was the birth of the Republican party in Illinois. Such were the men who set the ball in motion which is now rolling forward with irresistible force. Almost without exception they are men who loved liberty for itself and not for office. They were the founders, and they have been the pioneers and fighting men of the party. They have fought its battles, won its victories and have brought it to the threshold of a great triumph."

Although the convention of 1854 failed of its object, so far as perfecting the new party organization was concerned, the platform there adopted not only enunciated the principles accepted by the party two years later, but played a curious and interesting part in the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858. This grew out of the production by Senator Douglas before the audience at the first debate held at Ottawa on August 21, of that year, of a series of extremely radical resolutions, which he said had been adopted at the Springfield meeting, of which he represented that Mr. Lincoln had been a member, and of which he became a representative by virtue of his appointment to a membership on the state central committee. As to the last it has already been shown that Mr. Douglas was in error, as he also was in regard to the genuineness of the resolutions themselves. These had, in fact, been adopted by a local convention in the northern part of the state,—in Aurora, I think,—but, whether innocently or intentionally, I will not presume to say,—had been incorrectly published by the *State Register,* a few days after the Springfield convention of October 4 and 5, 1854, as the platform adopted there. At the next debate, which occurred at Freeport, a week later, Mr. Lincoln was in a position not only to vindicate himself from responsibility for the Springfield meeting, but to expose Mr. Douglas' blunder. Douglas excused himself on the ground that the resolutions had been used in debate by Thomas L. Harris, then a member of congress from the Springfield district, as those adopted at the Springfield meeting, and that he had been assured by the editor of the *Register* that this was correct. That Mr. Douglas was unconsciously led into an error by the misrepresentation of his own organ there is no doubt, but its effect was to produce a recoil from his argument at Ottawa, which caused him no little chagrin and mortification at the time, and from which he did not fully escape during the remainder of the debates.

I reiterate what I said at the beginning of this digression, that I do not allude to this incident in any spirit of partisanship, but simply as a part of the history of the times we are commemorating today.

The Germans and the German Press.

Pres. Davis:

After the suppression of the Revolution of 1848, large numbers of the liberty loving Germans came to this country. On the formation of the Republican party the most of them came into its ranks, because they considered it the only party of liberty.

Our speaker tonight is a native of Germany, an eminent lawyer, an author of legal works, and a German poet, who will address us on "The Germans and the German Press."

I have the pleasure of introducing Hon. William Vocke.

WILLIAM VOCKE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The last week of the month of May, 1854, marks a most momentous epoch in the political history of our country. After weeks of unparalleled excitement reflected in the debates of congress, as well as in all other agencies of public utterance throughout the country, the federal house of representatives, on the 22d day of said month, passed the Kansas-Nebraska bill by which the time-honored Missouri Compromise between the free states of the north and the southern slave states was repealed. Three days later the senate concurred in the measure; on the 30th of May it received the signature of the president, whereby it became a law, and thus all the territories lying north of 36 degrees, 30 minutes north latitude were exposed to the inroads of the southern slave power. To the better element of the northern people, recognizing as they did that slavery was a frightful blot upon the civilization of the nineteenth century, it was hardly conceivable that the grandchildren of the patriots of the War of Independence could so far forget themselves as to tear down the last bulwark which the wisdom of their freedom-loving fathers had

William Vocke was born at Minden, Germany, 1839; emigrated to United States in 1856, and came to Chicago; studied law, captain in 24th Ill. Vols.; 1870, elected representative to General Assembly; attorney for the German consulate at Chicago; a leading lawyer of Chicago and of high literary taste; member of the Republican National Convention of 1872.

HON. WILLIAM VOCKE.

established against the curse, and while all the political organizations of the country, the Democrats, Whigs, Free-Soilers and Know-Nothings, were alike thrown into a state of disintegration, everywhere the germs sprang up for the formation of a new party which should, upon strictly constitutional grounds, distinctly mark the limits of the slave-power.

Two months before the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill a number of Whigs, Free-Soilers and Democrats met on several days in an humble school house of the modest little town of Ripon, Wisconsin, to discuss the formation of a new party, and on the 30th of March, 1854, it was suggested that it be called the "Republican party" and a resolution was carried that its object should be to secure the confinement of slavery within its present limits. It does not seem to be definitely established, whether or not to this obscure spot in the then far west belongs the glory of having given the first impetus to the organization that brought about the memorable events to which our nation owes its deliverance from the relic of cruelest barbarism.

The day after the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska bill about thirty members of the federal house of representatives met in conference to take the formation of the new party in hand, because there was no longer any hope that the old ones could successfully oppose the encroachments of the slave-power. Here too the name "Republican party" was proposed for the new organization. From that moment the agitation proceeded throughout the northern states until the organization received definite shape at a convention of delegates from various northern states held on Washington's birthday in 1856 at Pittsburg, where it was resolved to call a national convention for the nomination of candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. This convention was held on the 17th of June, the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill, at Philadelphia. Meanwhile the people were thoroughly aroused, permanent organizations were formed everywhere, nominating conventions were held in all the states throughout

the north, thus in this state the Bloomington convention on the day we now celebrate, and the Republican party, having been successfully launched, entered upon a career of triumph and glory which has shed the greatest lustre upon the history of our country. In sympathy with the widely expressed sentiments of the north the Philadelphia convention did not stop with the demand that the former barriers against the extension of slavery should merely be restored, but it declared:

"We demand and shall attempt to secure the repeal of all laws which allow the introduction of slavery into territories once consecrated to freedom, and will resist by every constitutional means the existence of slavery in any of the territories of the United States."

I have been invited to show on this occasion what part the German element of the country took in the mighty movement which led to the overthrow of the southern slave power and the regeneration and securer establishment of our national Union.

The immigrants from Germany, who had become naturalized here, had, before the attitude of the two great parties toward slavery became clearly defined, instinctively drifted toward the Democratic party, not only because there was a natural charm in the word "Democratic," but also because they found that the Know-Nothing party, which had for a few years achieved phenomenal successes principally in the northern states, had been most extensively recruited from the old Whigs. But when the issue between free labor and negro slavery was once squarely presented, their education and great good sense prompted them at once to take a firm stand on the side of freedom. They had never been able to perceive, why under a free government persons should be held in slavery, the subject of barter and sale like cattle, because their skin was black and their hair woolly. They keenly recognized that labor was degraded by the slave holder at the expense of the free man. As citizens of this republic, which had become their and their children's fatherland, they appreciated that they, with all the rest of the people, were

responsible for its good government; but they did not busy themselves with the niceties of the question of states' rights or state sovereignty, because, in abjuring the allegiance they formerly owed to another sovereign, they had not become citizens of the particular state alone in which they had taken up their abode, but Americans enjoying the protection of that flag which waved over the entire country. It was also clear to them that in the fundamental law of the Union no guarantees were expressed either for the protection or extension of slavery, and hence they solved all doubts in their minds as to the law of the case in favor of the inalienable rights of man. Then again the Missouri Compromise had for more than thirty years served as a bulwark against the spread of slavery into the northern territories, and why should this barrier now be ruthlessly broken down in order to admit a hideous institution which made every right-minded man in the country blush with shame? From this mode of reasoning the Germans neither took kindly to the notion of squatter sovereignty, because they could not see why the black blotch of slavery should be permitted to disfigure the fair western domain, simply because it might be imported through the back door by the border ruffians. The arguments were few and simple, our German-American citizens, acting independently everywhere, planted themselves firmly on the side of freedom, and swelled the ranks of the Republican party immensely, for it should not be forgotten that in our western states in particular their number was great enough to make them a powerful factor, when the destinies of our country were finally decided at the ballot box.

The southern slaveholders viewed the position of the Germans with the utmost bitterness and alarm, which came to the surface not only in the bloody Know-Nothing riots at Baltimore, Louisville and other southern cities, but also in most violent public utterances of many of the foremost men of the south. The Know-Nothings of the north were, in their secret and mysterious efforts to disfranchise the foreign element of our people, prompted chiefly by their

hatred of the Catholic church; the slaveholders' party, however, announced its ill-will against the Germans of the north only for the stand they took against slavery and on that account they were pronounced to be the most un-American element in the Union. The Kansas-Nebraska bill was first introduced by Senator Douglas on the 23d of January, 1854. Six days later a mass meeting of Germans was held in Chicago under the leadership of Mr. George Schneider, the editor of the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* and an honored member of your convention, protesting against the passage of the bill, and so far as I have been able to find, this was the first indignation meeting directed against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in the country. Shortly after the passage of the bill the Germans of Chicago held another rally called by Edward Schlaeger, editor of a weekly German paper entitled the *German-American,* Fritz Baumann and others, expressing their abhorrence at the measure. At this meeting its author, Stephen A. Douglas, was burnt in effigy. This was the signal for an outburst of bitter hatred against the German element on the part of the southern oligarchs in congress. Shortly after the convening of that body in December, 1854, Adams, of Mississippi, introduced a naturalization bill under which foreigners should not be admitted to citizenship until after a residence of twenty-one years, giving, as he did, as a reason for this measure the fact that the wicked Germans had sent in so many petitions against the Kansas-Nebraska bill and declaring further: "When I learned the indignity offered to Senator Douglas by a German mob, I determined to introduce this bill." In their perverseness other southern representatives boldly insisted that the attitude of the Germans on the slavery question showed them to be incapable of entering into the spirit of American life and of assimilating with our people, and that hence the safest and only way to bring about assimilation was to deprive them of the right of suffrage.

Though it may be conceded that the desire of the southern slaveholders to disfranchise the German element

was from their view-point perfectly reasonable, it will nevertheless be seen that the arguments by which they sought to carry it out were wholly worthless, and that nothing in the whole range of political agitation could have afforded a more striking proof of the fact, that the Germans were in the best sense of the expression thoroughly Americanized, than their opposition to slavery.

In that great movement the Germans were so resolute and so united that from the very start they left no one in doubt as to their position. At the second annual meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society held on the 10th of May, 1854, at the New York Tabernacle, the following resolution was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That we rejoice in the great unanimity manifested by the German presses, and our German fellow-citizens throughout the country, in opposition to the Nebraska scheme, so inimical to their Democratic principles, to their cherished hopes and to the renown of their adopted country."

Shortly after the enactment of the infamous Nebraska bill it was shown by the *Cincinnati Gazette* that in its published list of eighty-eight German newspapers in this country there were eighty that had declared their firm opposition to the measure, while only eight remained which were debased enough to defend it.

Thus from the very beginning the Germans proved to be true not only to the noblest traditions of their race, which has been the natural friend of an enlightened freedom the world over, but also to the most vital interests of the new country, in which they had found hospitable homes. Their noble and God-fearing countryman Francis Daniel Pastorius, who was at the head of the little band brought into Pennsylvania by William Penn in 1683, had been the first man in this land who issued a public protest against the crime of slavery in which he warningly exclaimed to the American colonists: "Have not these negroes as much right to fight for their freedom as you have to keep them slaves?" This same sentiment was theirs, because it was the true Ger-

man instinct, and with it they marched shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-citizens of other nationalities, in order to achieve for our country that universal freedom which our revolutionary forefathers had in truth and in fact intended to establish.

During the trying years which followed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise our fellow-citizens of German extraction never faltered in their attachment to the cause of freedom. In 1860, their votes decided the election of Abraham Lincoln, and hence the pure-minded Charles Sumner might well say as he did on the 25th day of February, 1862: "Our German fellow-citizens, throughout the long contest with slavery, have not only been earnest and true, but have always seen the great question in its just character and importance. Without them our cause would not have triumphed at the last presidential election. It is only natural, therefore, that they should continue to guard and advance this cause." And a little later the same illustrious champion of freedom spoke the following words on the floor of the senate: "The brave and pure German stock, which, even from that early day, when first revealed to history in the sharp and clean-cut style of Tacitus, has preserved its original peculiarities untouched by change, showing that, though the individual is mortal, the race is immortal. * * * We cannot forget the fatherland which out of its abundance has given to our republic so many good heads, so many strong arms, with so much virtue and intelligence, rejoicing in freedom and calling no man master."

It would be like an attempt to brighten the lustre of the sun were we to cumulate further evidence showing the position of the Germans and the German press on the slavery issue. The facts stand out boldly on the pages of our history. Throughout the political contest, as well as in all the gloomy hours of the Civil War, in which the blood of the best men of the nation washed out the foul stain of slavery, the position of our German-American citizens was consistent and patriotic. But for the steadfast loyalty which the Ger-

mans of St. Louis evinced at the outbreak of the war, Missouri would have been taken out of the Union and the task of our government to suppress the slaveholders' rebellion would have been infinitely harder to accomplish. The archives of the war department at Washington show, that upon the basis of the population of the loyal states, as ascertained by the census of 1860, the German element of the country furnished 60,000 more soldiers than, with reference to the whole number of enlistments during the war, it would have been obliged to furnish, had all the people of every other nativity at that time represented here enlisted in the same ratio. On every battlefield of the Union the loyalty and devotion of that element for the country and the flag was most nobly demonstrated.

But it should not be forgotten that the noble bearing of our German-American citizens in the most sacred cause of the country found at all times grateful recognition at the hands of the Republican party in this state, and that the invaluable services of the men who led them in the holy crusade against slavery were always duly appreciated and honored. Thus the patriotic Frederick Hecker, famous for his warm devotion to the cause of human freedom in the Fatherland as well as here, was as early as 1856 accorded the high honor of being placed on the Republican ticket as a presidential elector at large by the side of the immortal Lincoln. In 1860, the distinguished Francis A. Hoffmann, now a venerable patriarch, devoting his life to most useful literary labors, was elected by the Republican party lieutenant governor of the state. At the same time the Republicans of Cook county elected A. C. Hesing, another German leader of great strength, as sheriff of Cook county. In 1861 the learned and accomplished Gustav Koerner, of Belleville, was appointed by president Lincoln minister at the Court of Spain, George Schneider, of Chicago, who was an honored member of your convention, was intrusted with an important consulate in Europe, and Herman Kreissmann of the same place was made secretary of legation at Berlin.

On the whole it must be conceded that no man in the nation valued the inestimable services of the Germans in the cause of the Republican party more highly than the sainted Lincoln. Right after his inauguration, besides those already named from this state, he appointed a number of other prominent Germans from all over the country to important diplomatic and consular positions abroad, one a federal judge in Missouri and a host of others to administrative offices of every character. And this splendid example of the fair treatment of an element which had given such noble proof of its keen appreciation of the highest civic duties and its steadfast loyalty to the same, found at all times proper emulation among the Republicans of this state until recently. The Germans are not mercenaries in politics, but they have a right to ask that they be not excluded from public honors, because they not only form, next to our native American voters, the strongest element in the Republican party, as has been shown at the last as well as at all previous presidential elections during the last forty years, but such exclusion must necessarily have the effect of stamping them as unworthy to hold office.

The invitation extended to me to explain on this occasion the honorable part the Germans took in wiping out from the proud escutcheon of our nation the stain of slavery, shows the great good will cherished by the callers of this meeting for the German element of this state and country. It evinces the true spirit in which the different elements of our people should approach each other and in which harmony among all can be best fostered. Let us for the common good of all assiduously cultivate this spirit of harmony and with a heart filled with enlightened toleration bear with the legitimate peculiarities of all, no matter how widely others may vary from our own. Let no German ever berate his fellow-citizens of another race because of characteristics distinct from his. Let no other citizen look slightingly upon the German because of his manners, or believe him to be less intelligent than his fellow-man of equal station in life, because, speaking a foreign tongue, he cannot express his

thoughts in the language of the country as well as he who has imbibed the English at his mother's breast.

Every nation is visited at times by movements which partake of the character of a craze, and though they cannot lastingly divert it from its legitimate aspirations and normal political development they may nevertheless for the time being work serious mischief. In this behalf it may be safely said that no element of the American people has shown itself to be better equipped to resist such crazes, whether they are the outgrowth of our economic life or of our intercourse with the outside world, than our German-American citizens. We may, therefore, always rest assured that the honor, the dignity, and the greatness of our common country will never suffer at their hands. True, blind partisanship has sometimes stigmatized them as unreliable, but the dictates of party are not always prompted by patriotism and good statesmanship, for it sometimes happens that, either from stupidity or for the sake of office or pelf, the honor of the country is placed in jeopardy by the very men who direct the policy of a party. Although it may sound paradoxical, it is nevertheless true, as stated by one of the foremost writers of our history, that "one of the most powerful factors in the progressive nationalization of the republic is its adopted citizens who have come from all the countries of the earth." It was largely due to this fact that the Germans, at the time of our country's greatest peril, rallied round the flag of liberty and Union, and upon that rock alone they will always rest their adherence to party.

Owen Lovejoy, Constitutional Abolitionists and the Republican Party.

Pres. Davis:

Benjamin F. Shaw, for nearly half a century editor and proprietor of the *Dixon Telegraph*, a delegate to the editorial convention of February 22, 1856, that called the convention of May 29, and also a delegate to that convention, has written a paper on "Lovejoy and the Constitutional Abolitionists, and the Republican Party." I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Benjamin F. Shaw, of Dixon.

BENJAMIN F. SHAW, OF DIXON, ILL.

The evangelist awakens interest in his cause by recalling the suffering of Christ and His fellow-martyrs. On the Fourth of July the American citizen renews his patriotism in recalling Valley Forge and the "times that tried men's souls." Is it not well that we, also, in our own day recall deeds of heroic sacrifice rendered for our fellow men? I could not refuse a request of the McLean County Historical Society, to tell in my own poor way, what I know about "Lovejoy, Constitutional Abolitionists and the Republican Party." They took up a political contest that meant, in a goodly portion of the country, social and political ostracism at that time; while the chances were that the people they interceded for would never hear their names mentioned. It was an unselfish and patriotic labor, for the relief of a people; and, indeed, a great nation.

It may not be gracious to compare matters political with sacred history, still I shall urge that the party whose birth we today celebrate, stands without a rival in the line of advancing a great nation to a higher civilization. No human agency in all the tide of times has accomplished more in modifying

B. F. Shaw was born in Waverly, New York, March 31, 1831, of American parents. His father's mother was the last survivor, at her death, of the "Massacre of Wyoming." Her father and two uncles were killed in the battle. His mother's father, Major Zephon Flowers, was a Revolutionary soldier, and a descendant of Governor Bradford, of Massachusetts, who kept the log of the Mayflower.

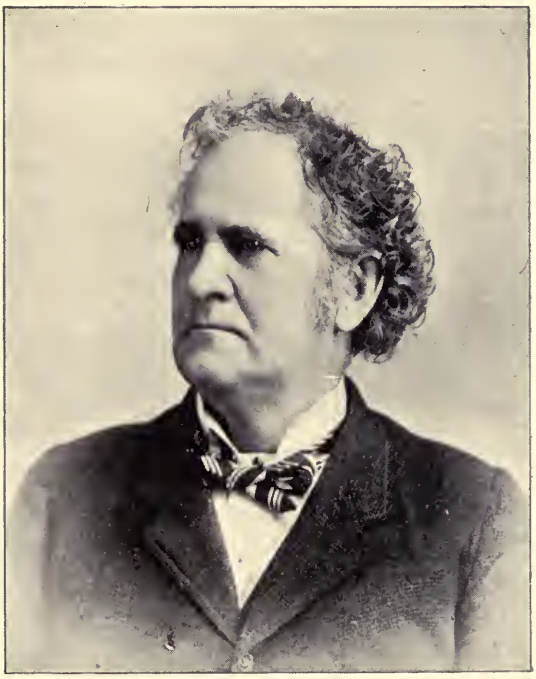
Mr. Shaw is now owner and proprietor of the *Dixon Telegraph* and has been for many years. Was Washington correspondent of a leading Chicago paper in 1867 and 1868. He was two terms clerk of the circuit court and recorder of Lee county and six years a canal commissioner of the state of Illinois. Has served one term as postmaster at Dixon, Illinois, and is the present incumbent of that office.

He was a member of the Decatur convention February 22, 1856, that called the Bloomington convention, which on May 29, 1856, nominated the first Republican state ticket and a member of the convention of May 29.

"man's inhumanity to man, which makes countless thousands mourn," than the Republican party. Its efforts have been in a spirit of pure patriotism and the universal brotherhood of man.

It turned a despotism, the worst the world had ever seen, into a republic; transformed slavery into freedom. The first act of the Republican party was that of giving a farm and a home to every poor man who would accept. It gave, through protection, to American industry, the laborer of this country such wages as no nation before gave to the wage-earner. It has always acted the part of the mighty philanthropist toward all the people. Republicanism not only extended into the jungle of ignorance in our own land, but it is now penetrating the jungles of the far east, and its beacon light of civil and religious liberty is blessing the Orient; there to enlighten barbarism. It is through Republicanism that this nation has become the guiding star of liberty everywhere.

Lovejoy, Constitutional Abolitionists and the Republican party, a host of heroes my theme, patriots who endured many trials, a subject requiring volumes, to be condensed into a brief essay—my task is not easy. A talk on a mighty epoch in the history of recent civilization condensed into a brief hour. A brave and mighty host battling against slavery and depotism, manfully as Greek at Marathon. Suffering as Christian martyrs suffered. If Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus, they were not more beastly cruel than the men that the Lovejoy brothers fought against at Alton in our own state. The preliminary skirmish in the fight for liberty in this land was begun by the Radical Abolitionist long before the final battle. They were, it is true, but a mere handful; but they were strong men, with brilliant intellects and brave hearts, well fitted to bear the jeers of ignorant partisans. Both the great parties of the day were bitterly opposed to them. Many churches were indifferent. I heard the great Frederick Douglass state that while in slavery, the burden of the prayers he heard were quotations from Scripture that servants should obey their masters.



BENJAMIN F. SHAW.

In this day it sounds strange to say that a lecture on slavery in a school house or church anywhere in the Free States was liable to result in mob violence against the speaker. Henry Wilson in his "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power" is authority for the statement that Henry B. Stanton in lecturing upon the subject of Emancipation, through the New England and middle states, though he always spoke in patriotic praise of the constitution and the Union, was mobbed some two hundred times, often at the imminent peril of his life. An advocate of freedom was in the minds of the people at that time an inciter of riots.

The machinery of the church in many of their ramifications of literary and benevolent institutions, the preachers and the press were opposed to anti-slavery agitation. But the skirmish line, though thin, was bravely pushed on by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Gerritt Smith, Theodore Parker and a few others. They were not Constitutional Abolitionists. They took it for granted that the political leaders of the Calhoun class were right in claiming that the constitution recognized slavery, and so they proclaimed that the much revered document was "an agreement with hell and a covenant with the devil." They were, however, followed by a class known as the Constitutional Abolitionists; equally bold and brave, but more practical. It was the labor of the latter that accomplished glorious results; fought the good battle to a finish and destroyed the slave power. They were among the organizers of the Republican party. I recall the names of Owen Lovejoy, Greeley, Wade, Giddings, Fessenden, Chase, Hale, Hamlin, Wilmot, Thaddeus Stephen, John Wentworth, Seward, Baker, Bissell, Sumner, Washburne, and last but not least, Lincoln. They held the constitution and the Union as a sacred inheritence. In the minds of many statesmen of that day, there was something of a struggle between hatred of slavery and love for the constitution of the Union. Abhorrence of human bondage was neutralized by patriotic love of country. The political leaders of both the great parties made a great ado, (perhaps to excuse their objection to abolition agi-

tation,) over the claim that the constitution recognized slavery. The Constitutional Abolitionists, even the rank and file were forced to become accomplished students of the fundamental law of the land. They denied the claim of slavery-recognition with such confidence, that copies of the revered document were printed in condensed form to carry in the pocket for ready reference; that it might be demonstrated that it did not recognize slavery.

They contended that under the constitution slaves could not be legally held in territory not organized into states.

Constitutional Abolitionists, Republicans, if you please, believed that slavery was not recognized by the constitution, save indirectly. They urged that slavery was a mere matter of fact in the face of the national and state constitution. In face of everything but a tyrannical public sentiment and a diabolical practice, they argued that man cannot be property. An auctioneer could not transmogrify a man with a soul into a chattel. One man has no right to own another man. If one man can be sold as property, every man can, and constitutions made to protect human liberty are annulled if they fail. There is no allusion to the right of one man to enslave another. Love of country and reverence for the constitution, was used to advantage by the slave power and threats of secession were frequent. Like a pall, fear of dissolution of the Union hung over the American people during the many years of slavery agitation. Threats of secession should the slave power have its way were common. I remember one bright day there came sensational dispatches from Washington announcing that the stability of the Union of the states was in danger. There was activity in the war and navy department. Battleships were ordered to Boston, and the army and navy put on a war footing, troops were mustered around the court house in Boston. And what do you imagine was the cause of all this fuss. The constitution was about to be shattered, the perpetuity of the nation was endangered, because, to use a phrase of that day, a "nigger was loose." A man preferring liberty to slavery had escaped from the south as a stowaway on a schoon-

er and landed in Boston, where he was duly arrested. So it would appear that a little carelessness on the part of a slave holder, as regard to his favorite chattel, would endanger the perpetuity of the Union, before Republicans took charge of the nation.

The Constitutional Abolitionists bravely waged the war, against the further extension of slavery; at the polls, and on the floor of congress, enduring insults such as had been heaped upon the most radical; threatened with assassination, a learned senator beaten into insensibility on the floor of the Senate.

It appears to have been willed that the battle of freedom should be hot, in the fiery ordeal the heat might become sufficiently intense to melt the shackles more completely from enslaved limbs. A word against slavery was interpreted as a blow at the constitution, a step towards disunion; that grand prophecy that this government could not remain half slave, and half free, was charged up against Lincoln, as a most rank disunion sentiment. The prejudice against Abolitionists, philosophers tell us, resulted from a patriotic motive, love of country—very properly classed in this day as a sophistical paradox,—destruction of a school house in Connecticut where colored girls were taught to read; mobbing of a colored asylum, abolition persecutions, result of patriotic motives! We are told that many great evils of the world have been committed by ignorant men of good intentions, material used in paving the road to Hades. We have it in the history of religious persecutors, ignorant of truth, the ardor of their sincerity warms them into persecution, brings fanaticism into deadly activity, the evil they do is the result of misdirected virtue. This may be applied to the mass of that day, but is not an excuse for the pro-slavery leaders and politicians. In our own state there were many legislative struggles, indicative of slave power enmity. I remember that your own city of Bloomington furnished a backer for Governor Yates in troublous times here; he was a man who did not fear to tell copperheads who endeavored to stop appropriation for supplies for our soldiers,

ISAAC FUNK, Funk's Grove, Ill.

Born November 17, 1797, Kentucky; died January 29, 1865; stock raiser, land owner; State Senator 1862 to 1865. See Good Old Times McLean County 580 and Volume II, Transactions McLean County Historical Society.

that they were traitors, and hurl back their insults so defiantly that Lincoln gave him praise. The name of Isaac Funk should have a place in this history. An all-wise Providence has ways of his own in gathering his instrumentalities for the purpose of purifying nations. Had the slave holder been content to let slavery remain where it was, and not endeavor by fraud and murder to extend it into the territories, how different might have been our history. "Whom the Gods would destroy, they first make mad." I well remember that it was the manner of forcing slavery into Kansas, by intimidation and fraud, that caused universal indignation of fair-minded men, quite as much so, as any anti-slavery sentiment that then existed. There was a notion among the people that the ballot box in its purity was the palladium of our liberty. The Missouri Compromise, an agreement between the slave and Free States, that slavery should not go into the territories north of a certain line, 36 degrees, 30 minutes, was repealed by congress. Senator Douglas, of our state, introduced the measure, and it was passed in May, 1854. By him it was cunningly worded. The law which had been revered a quarter of a century as an agreement settling a controversy between the states was, in the repealing act, declared inoperative, because "inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention with slavery," and "did not permit people to regulate their own domestic institution." This act of repeal alarmed the nation. A sacred trust had been broken. Douglas defended the repeal, claiming that it was in the interest of self-government, and called it "Squatter Sovereignty." "The people could decide whether or not they would have slavery." It was soon demonstrated that this was a trick. The people were not permitted to decide the question, if a Democratic party then in power could prevent it. It was soon apparent that the full power of the government was to be used to force the people of Kansas to adopt a slave constitution against their will. The hypocritical cant about the consent of the governed was not then in use by Democratic statesmen. Emigrant Aid Societies were organized to assist in settling Kansas with freedom lov-

ing settlers. They went from New England and other northern states.

"They crossed the Prairie as of old
The Pilgrims crossed the Sea,
To make the West as they the East,
The homestead of the free."

I will not detain you with a repetition of that disgraceful history. How the president with the army, militia from slave states under pay of the government, swarms of border ruffians overrunning that territory for the sole purpose of driving legal voters from the polls, failed in the effort to force slavery upon an unwilling people. Homicide, underpay, and murder by order from the White House at Washington; brutality and hatred dressed in regimentals, malignity in epaulets; bloody mania in support of human bondage. It is strange that there were so few John Browns. A pro-slavery Democratic legislature made up of people who went there not as settlers, but to make it a slave state, passed laws making the simple speaking to a slave a death penalty. Two score of laws enforcing the death penalty for using words and acts in opposition to slavery.

That was the reason a couple dozen editors gathered at Decatur and called the Bloomington convention which we today celebrate. Patriots everywhere were alarmed for the liberty of the whites as well as the blacks. In the first Republican convention of a national character, Owen Lovejoy in an eloquent prayer did not ask an all-wise Providence to abolish slavery, but he made an eloquent and earnest plea for better politics in the party then in power. He hoped for fair election in Kansas. Being a minister of the gospel Mr. Lovejoy had some sort of an idea that perhaps the Almighty might have some sort of an influence with the people at the coming election if not with a Democratic president and so he prayed, to use the exact words, that the "Present wicked administration might be removed from power and its unholy design on the liberties of the people thwarted."

On the day that Owen Lovejoy uttered that patriotic prayer in Pittsburg, the editors of Illinois met at Decatur. Though my friend, Mr. Selby, tells you of that meeting, and General Palmer will well cover the subject, may I not digress to recall a few incidents. I was one of the committee on resolutions, and had the good fortune of being in consultation with Abraham Lincoln, in forming the first Republican platform in Illinois. At the banquet in the evening given by the citizens of Decatur, I was informed that I would be called upon for a toast, and so prepared one which was so complimentary of Mr. Lincoln that when I saw that he was present, I did not have the cheek to give voice to my admiration, and changed my toast and spoke something about placing free ballot boxes in the hands of freemen and meeting despots with cartridge boxes. Mr. Lincoln was in a happy mood. I remember that apologetically, for being at a convention of editors, he called attention to what I have always imagined a personal reminiscence. He stated that he believed he was a sort of interloper there and was reminded of the incident of a man not possessed of features the ladies would call handsome, while riding on horseback through the woods met an equestrienne. He reined his horse to one side of the bridle path and stopped, waiting for the woman to pass. She also checked her horse to a stop and looked him over in a curious sort of a way, finally broke out with,

"Well, for land sake, you are the homeliest man I ever saw."

"Yes, madam, but I can't help it."

"No, I suppose not," she said, "but you might stay at home."

Lincoln urged that he felt as though he might have stayed at home on that occasion.

In the line of thought regarding Constitutional Abolitionists, I recall an interview with Mr. Lincoln at his residence at Springfield, that has not heretofore been made public. It occurred a few weeks before his departure for Washington to deliver his inaugural address, and take his seat as president. I, with several Dixon citizens, among them

Col. John Dement, a leading Democrat in the state, who had enjoyed an acquaintance with the president-elect in early days, and was a comrade in the Black Hawk War, called to pay our respects. When we arrived we were ushered into the parlor where we found several gentlemen from Arkansas, and, I believe from other border states, as they were then called, who had come as a sort of a committee to urge upon the president-elect to issue some sort of a manifesto assuring the people of the south that it was not his intention to liberate the slaves. The committee was very urgent in the matter and seemed to believe that such a precaution was necessary to prevent insurrection among the slaves, who were impatient regarding their anticipated freedom. It was urged by the gentlemen from the south that the slaves believed that Mr. Lincoln's election meant their freedom. They had been told that they would be liberated. They heard the people of the south talk about it and were discontented. The committee understood very well that Mr. Lincoln did not intend to abolish slavery. But the negroes and the ignorant whites of the south did not so understand it. The gentlemen believed that it was the duty of the president-elect to at once undeceive them. Several members of that committee of safety earnestly urged the importance of some assurance from Lincoln to colored men and ignorant people of the south, that an Emancipation Proclamation would not be among his first official acts. He listened respectfully, and after the importance of a proclamation was fully urged, he made a reply that was so masterful in logic; so touching in kindness and yet so full of marvelous sarcasm coupled with witticism showing the absurdity of the proposition of the committee, that I shall never forget it. Mr. Lincoln opened in answer by stating that such a manifesto would indicate fear on his part and would be, by most of the citizens of the south, attributed to cowardice, a charge freely made against the people of the north generally. He believed that his inaugural address which would in a few days be delivered from the steps of the national capital, would be in ample time to undeceive people having erroneous opinions upon the matters which troubled

them. To anticipate his inaugural address, as requested, would be unwise and lacking in dignity. He closed his remarks with much earnestness and no little emphasis; the words I remember quite well: "In all my speeches," he said, "I have never uttered a word indicating intention to interfere with slavery where it exists in states; Republican speakers and newspapers not only never advocated abolition of slavery, but are constantly refuting the charge that they are radical Abolitionists. Such utterance has been one of the principal contentions of the campaign just closed. So you see, gentlemen, if the colored people of the south have heard that I intended to abolish slavery, they received the idea from the lips of your own people; from their masters at the dinner table, or heard it at your own political meetings, and not from any Republican source; therefore it is your duty to rectify the mistake. It is certainly not encumbent upon me to correct at this time the falsehoods of our opponents."

As the people of the south were then threatening to destroy the government and Civil War was inevitable, he remarked that the committee reminded him of the disadvantageous excitement of the man whose house was on on fire, who, in his efforts to save property, threw mirrors, pitchers and valuable vases out of the second story window, and carried flat-irons and bedding carefully down stairs in his arms.

The committee retired with the firm impression that Lincoln had a mind of his own, as one of them was heard to remark. After they had departed, a man from central Illinois placed in Mr. Lincoln's hands application papers for a post-office and remarked that the boys were ready to fight for him. Mr. Lincoln turned to Colonel Dement, again shook him by both hands cordially, and remarked that he did not enjoy the talk about *fighting* for him. He was in the mood of Robert Burns when he wrote

"The deities I adore
Are social peace and plenty,
I'm better pleased to add one more
Than be the death of twenty."

Meeting Mr. Lincoln the next day at the hotel I requested permission to print that interview at his private residence in my paper, he replied, "I'd a heap rather you had done it without asking me." This was a characteristic precaution in Lincoln that his endorsement should not even by inference appear to such an absurdity as the interview on the issuing of the manifesto. So I never printed it.

Owen Lovejoy firmly believed that the constitution was intended to protect human liberty and if rightly interpreted would do away with slavery. He did not even favor an amendment in that behalf, deeming it not necessary. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Lovejoy a number of times. I heard him deliver a speech at Amboy, Lee county, during a presidential campaign, when he was assisting to elect the Republican ticket. In that speech he urged the radical Abolitionists to support Lincoln, they generally having refused to do so, for the reason that the Republicans did not propose any action leading to the abolition of slavery. He told them the Republican party was going their way. To illustrate that idea he said that if he were walking on the road to Chicago, and a man passing in a wagon should ask him to ride, it would not be good sense for him to refuse because the man was going only a few miles on his route. He would not refuse to ride with the man because he was not going through to Chicago. No, he would climb in and ride as far as he went his way. So long as the Republicans are on their road he would advise radical Abolitionists to get in and ride with them, inasmuch as they were both going in the same direction.

I again met Mr. Lovejoy on a train enroute for Freeport, the day of Lincoln and Douglas' joint debate there. He was not in a pleasant humor. At Ottawa a few days before Douglas with a sneer had classed Lincoln as a Lovejoy Abolitionist in a manner intimating that the latter was of the radical class, thus misrepresenting the gentlemen from Princeton, much to his dislike. Remembering the temper he was in, after arriving at Freeport, when the debate was over, in the evening I suggested to a number of friends

that Mr. Lovejoy was in a humor to make a speech, and we would call him out. A dry goods box was improvised as a platform in front of the Brewster House and he readily responded to the call. I shall never forget that speech and magnificent appearance of the speaker; a man of splendid physique, Websterian mold of countenance, all aglow with flame of intellectual genius, interested deeply in the cause of humanity. Douglas had put the question to Lincoln, "Would he, if an officer of the law, return a fugitive slave to his master?" Lovejoy answered the interrogatory in scathing phillipics against Douglas and all others who had voted for the Fugitive Slave law. Taking the pythagorean idea of transmigration, he had the soul of Douglas turned into a savage bloodhound on the track of a slave escaping from bondage. A man innocent of crime, only a polar star as a guide to a freedom justly his, the man-greyhound in hot pursuit, lapping the mire by the wayside to quench his hellish thirst for blood. The cubless tigress raging in the jungle for her slaughtered offspring is touching sympathy compared with the man who would hunt down an innocent being that he might enslave.

A gem was lost when that speech was not reported and published. Douglas was a great leader, at one time beloved by the entire Democratic party. He lacked only one vote and a half of becoming president. His repeal of the Missouri Compromise proved his downfall. It caused great indignation in the north, and when he saw a Democratic president, a man of his own party, use all the influence and power of government in forcing slavery upon the unwilling people of Kansas where he had promised that people should be "free to vote slavery up or down," he was appalled at the diabolical enormities committed in the name of Democracy. He rebelled against the administration and then the southern leaders, heretofore friendly, whom he had always befriended, turned against him. Abolitionists had not endured more bitter insult than were heaped upon the senator from Illinois by southerners whose cause he had so favored. Hosts of friends in the north had ignominiously deserted him for the political acts

he had performed for the south. It was a monstrous ingratitude by the southern leaders. In Douglas it was a "grievous fault and grievously hath he answered it." His terrible plight is described by the poet Byron:

"As the struck eagle, stretched upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart,
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion that impelled the steel
While the same plumage that had warmed his nest,
Drank the last life-blood of his bleeding breast."

In a talk of Republicanism, in Illinois, we must needs speak of Stephen A. Douglas, its greatest opponent until the close of his life, when he became its warm supporter; an accomplished orator, wonderful debater, beloved at one time by millions of his countrymen. Small in stature and mighty in intellect, he was known as the "Little Giant." But alas, history classes him in the vast list where

"Vaulting ambition o'er leaps itself."

My friend, John H. Bryant, of Princeton, who was to speak today on the subject assigned me, but declined on account of ill health, in June, 1856, closed a letter to his brother, the great poet, in regard to the Bloomington convention, and especially politics in Illinois, with assurance that "She is solid for Freedom and the Constitution, for Republicanism and Right."

The words "Freedom and the Constitution" fully express the position of the Constitutional Abolitionists and Republicans of that day.

A Few Words for the Bloomington Commemoration Meeting.

BY GEN. JAMES M. RUGGLES.

It matters little that forty-four years ago, previous to the time of the Bloomington convention, my name was the only one prominent as the running mate of Governor Bissell for lieutenant governor, that I was one of the vice-presidents of that convention—or that in February previously at a meeting at the capital of Whigs and Free Soil Democrats who were ready for the organization of a party more fully representing the tide of advanced political principles, I was one of the committee associated with Abraham Lincoln and Ebenezer Peck, and prepared the resolutions adopted at the meeting which led to the convention held on the 29th of May, 1856.

It matters much, however, that the convention was held and that a portion of the leading men of both parties came together and took their places beside Abraham Lincoln on a platform of expansion of free territory, enlarged human rights and human liberty, and expanded patriotism, on which basis every man nominated was elected and placed in office.

The time was auspicious. We were then under the last of the old time Democratic governors in Illinois who had appropriated to his own use about a quarter of a million dollars in state bonds and left the state a ruined man and a political party badly smirched. Since then we have had but one Democratic governor and he has made all other governors quite respectable—comparatively!

The nation was also in a turmoil over the slavery question. Lincoln had not yet announced the problem that "the nation could not long endure half slave and half free"—but the events then transpiring justified the assertion. Kansas was the theatre of operations of the Missouri Jay-hawkers, who without restraint of the administration were madly rushing on to the de-

B. F. Shaw
Geo. Schneider
Wm. Vocke
Paul Selby
J. M. Palmer
J. O. Cunningham
J. M. Ruggles
David McWilliams
T. J. Henderson

struction of the government of the establishment of slavery upon the virgin soil of the territory. They had captured and imprisoned the governor of the territory to make place for one in full sympathy with themselves. The governor's wife, a most beautiful and interesting lady, had fled for life to Illinois for protection and was on the train that carried the delegates from Springfield to Bloomington—her presence creating the profoundest sympathy and the wildest enthusiasm.

Not all the Whigs and a lesser portion of the Democrats joined in the movement. It was too radical for many who had been leaders in the old political parties, and too conservative for the radical Abolitionist, but occupied safe ground upon which to found a great political party which has for forty years ruled the destines of the nation—vastly expanding it in population, education, wealth and territory, until at the present time when it occupies the proud place of the most enlightened and powerful nation on the globe.

The nominees at that convention, after faithfully serving the people in the places assigned them, have long since laid down their well spent lives—leaving us to cherish their memories and emulate their official example. Of all the great and good men that took part in that Bloomington meeting but few are left. Lincoln led the convention and was the first to lay down his life for the cause inaugurated there. Yates, Lovejoy, Browning, Washburn, Archibald Williams, Judd, Wentworth, and a host of others have followed him to the grave. Palmer, the honored president of that convention, I am glad to know, still lives.

The nominees of the convention were;

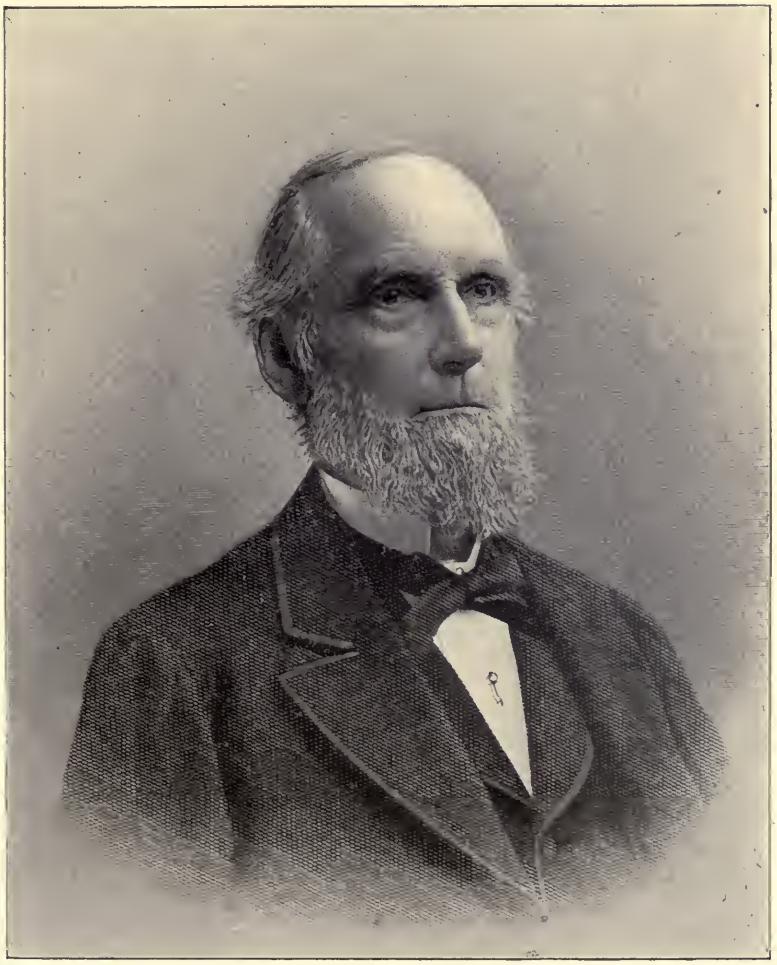
Wm. H. Bissell, for governor.

O. M. Hatch, for secretary of state.

Jesse K. Dubois, for auditor of public accounts.

James Miller, for state treasurer.

Wm. H. Powell, for superintendent of public instruction.



OZIAS M. HATCH

Born in New Hampshire April 11, 1814; died March 12, 1893, merchant, banker; Secretary of State 1857 to 1865. See Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery Illinois Volume 1896, page 140.

Remarks

Made at Bloomington, Illinois, May 29, 1900, at a Celebration of the Forty-fourth Anniversary of the Bloomington Convention held on May 29, 1856, at which the Republican Party in Illinois was Organized.

BY GEN. THOMAS J. HENDERSON, OF PRINCETON, ILL.

Mr. President and Members of the McLean County Historical Society, Ladies and Gentlemen: When invited to be present at this anniversary meeting, or celebration, the secretary of your society, kindly requested me to make some remarks on the campaign of 1856. But I declined to do so, for several reasons. In the first place, it was not certain that I could be present at the meeting, and even if I could be, my time was so occupied that I was not able to prepare any suitable remarks for an occasion of so much interest as this. And I felt that without preparation, any speech I might attempt to make would be rambling and of but little interest to those who might hear it.

The convention of May 29, 1856, the forty-fourth anniversary of which we today celebrate, marked an era in the political history of Illinois, and I may say, of the entire country. And on such an occasion so many memories come crowding upon us that it is difficult to control our thoughts and emotions, and to pursue any connected line of thought or speech. As we think of the many able, eloquent, earnest, patriotic men, who were present and members of that convention, and who participated in its proceedings, and of how many of them have since passed away, after having rendered distinguished services to the country, and what a small number still survive, we are almost overwhelmed. And so, my friends, in attempting to speak to you today, without preparation and with such a con-

Gen. Thomas J. Henderson was born at Brownsville, Tenn., November 19, 1824. Came to Illinois in 1837. Admitted to the bar 1856. In 1855-56 member of Illinois House of Representatives and State Secretary 1856 to 1860. Delegate to the Major's Hall convention May 29, 1856. In 1862 Col. 112 Ill. Vols. 1865 Brev. Brig. Gen. Republican presidential elector 1868. Representative in Congress, 1874 to 1895. Is president of the board of management of the National Soldiers' Home.

GEN. THOMAS J. HENDERSON.

fusion of memories, I fear my remarks will be of but little interest. But I am glad to be here to meet all who are present, and especially to meet the old friends, survivors of the convention of May 29, 1856.

The convention held at Major's Hall, in this city, in 1856, was a great convention—one of the most important and far-reaching in its influence and in its results, that was ever held in the state of Illinois, in my judgment. It had a deeper and stronger influence upon the political action of the people of the state, than any other convention ever held in the state. It fairly revolutionized the old political parties of the state.

I have always been proud of the fact that I was a member of that convention and participated in its proceedings. I was a delegate from Stark county and a member of the committee on resolutions. Orville H. Browning, of Quincy, a native of Kentucky, who had been a prominent Whig of the state, was, as I remember, chairman of the committee, which prepared the resolutions, or platform, adopted by the convention, and he made, on or after the presentation of the resolutions, an able and eloquent speech. There were present at the convention, either as members, or interested spectators, many of the able and distinguished men of the state, from all parts of the state. Men who had been leading, prominent members of the old political parties:—Abraham Lincoln, Archibald Williams, Orville H. Browning, Richard Yates, Richard J. Oglesby, and many other old Whigs—were there. And among the many old Democrats and Abolitionists were John M. Palmer, John F. Farnsworth, Norman B. Judd, John Wentworth, and Owen Lovejoy. All of them, including the Whigs named, were strong, able, earnest men, and deeply interested in the work of the convention. They were prominent then in the politics of the state, and some of them in the service of the country, and most of them afterwards distinguished themselves as soldiers in the War of the Rebellion and in civil life.

John M. Palmer, whom I am glad to see here today and am always glad to see, was the president of the convention;

and he not only distinguished himself in the campaign which followed the convention, as an able speaker and advocate of freedom and free territory, but he has served the country with great ability and distinction since, in both military and civil life, as a general, governor, and United States senator. He, also, made a strong and powerful speech at the convention in 1856.

But the great speech of that convention was the speech made by Abraham Lincoln. His speech was of such wonderful eloquence and power that it fairly electrified the members of the convention and everybody who heard it. It was a great speech in what he said, in the burning eloquence of his words, and in the manner in which he delivered it. If ever a speech was inspired in this world, it has always seemed to me, that that speech of Mr. Lincoln's was. It aroused the convention, and all who heard it, and sympathized with the speaker, to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. I have never heard any other speech that had such great power and influence over those to whom it was addressed. I have always believed it to have been the greatest speech Mr. Lincoln ever made, and the greatest speech to which I ever listened. I can never forget that speech, and especially that part of it where, after repelling with great power and earnestness the charge of disunion made against the Anti-Nebraska party, he stood as if on tip-toe, his tall form erect, his long arms extended, his face fairly radiant with the flush of excitement, and, as if addressing those preferring the charge of disunionism, he slowly, but earnestly and impressively, said:

"We do not intend to dissolve the Union, nor do we intend to let you dissolve it."

As he uttered these memorable and, I may say, prophetic words, the members of the convention and everybody present rose as one man to their feet, and there was a universal burst of applause, repeated over and over again, so that it was some moments before Mr. Lincoln could proceed with his speech.

John Cockle, of the city of New York, brother of Washington Cockle, a prominent citizen of Peoria, and a life-long

Democrat, sat by my side during Mr. Lincoln's speech; and was profoundly impressed by his wonderful eloquence. He said to me he was greatly surprised to find that Illinois had such a man as Abraham Lincoln, and that they knew nothing about him in New York; that he had lived in New York all his life and had heard most of the great men of the country speak at one time or another in that city; that he had heard Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Martin Van Buren, Levi Woodbury, Silas Wright, and others. But, he said, he had never before heard from any one so great a speech as the one just delivered by Mr. Lincoln. The speech converted him, and he became, as I was informed afterwards, a good Republican.

Mr. Lincoln's speech was delivered without manuscript, and I think, without notes; and no report of it was made. Nor has it ever been published until within a few years when a report of it written, as it is said, from notes taken at the time, was published as the "Lost Speech." And I am forced to say that I rather regret the publication, for I do not think it does justice to the speech that Mr. Lincoln delivered. In fact, I am strongly impressed with the belief, that no report could have been made and published then or since, especially after the lapse of so many years, which would give a just conception of the great power and magnetic effect of that memorable speech.

That speech, and the great debates between him and Stephen A. Douglas in 1858, made Mr. Lincoln president of the United States, and forever lost to Mr. Douglas the hope of the presidency, which was without doubt the highest ambition of his life.

But what can I say as to the campaign of 1856? I have said the convention of 1856 was a memorable one, and so the campaign that followed it was equally memorable. The campaign was made by only two parties—the Democratic or Nebraska party, struggling to maintain its supremacy, and the Anti-Nebraska or Republican party, battling to resist the encroachments of the slave-power, to which the Democratic

party, through the influence of Mr. Douglas and other leading Democrats, had yielded and seemingly given themselves up. The bad faith shown in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the opening of the way for human slavery to go into territory from which, by solemn compact, it had been forever excluded, had excited an intense feeling in the minds of liberty-loving Democrats, as well as Whigs and Abolitionists, in Illinois, that the further aggressions of the slave-power must cease or our freedom and free institutions would be overthrown. Hence the campaign of 1856 was a campaign of conscience, of deep conviction, of earnest purpose. It was the first political campaign in which I ever participated, actively as a speaker. I had made a few speeches in the campaign of 1852—the last campaign in which the Whigs had a candidate for the presidency, advocating the election of Gen. Winfield Scott and opposing that of Franklin Pierce. But in the campaign of 1856, I made nearly a hundred speeches. The Anti-Nebraska or Republican party, inspired by the action of the great convention and the great speeches made in it, at Bloomington, forty-four years ago today, started out to win, and immense meetings, addressed by Lincoln, Palmer, Trumbull, Farnsworth, Yates, Browning, Williams, Judd, Knox, Lovejoy, Codding, and other able and distinguished speakers, were held all over the state. I can remember as if it was but yesterday, how we spoke and sang at those great meetings for victory. Do you not remember, all of you who are old enough, the rallying-cry for "Free Soil; Free Speech; Free Press; Fremont and Victory?" And while we lost our presidential ticket in the state and nation, we elected the gallant Bissell, governor, and the whole state ticket, nominated in Major's Hall in this city, by a majority, which surprised and overwhelmed the Democrats of the state. And so earnest, energetic, and effective was the work done in the campaign of 1856, that we have never elected by one Democratic governor in the state since—and that was a great mistake.

The question is often asked, "Was Abraham Lincoln, at that early date, regarded as a great man and a great leader?" I an-

swer that he was; at least by those who knew him well. It was my good fortune to have known Mr. Lincoln from my boyhood. The first time I ever saw him was when I was 15 years of age. It was at an immense Whig convention, held at Springfield in June, 1840, in the Harrison and Van Buren campaign. This was said, at the time, to have been the largest convention ever held in the state. The Whigs came in large delegations from all parts of the state. They came with music and banners, in wagons and in carriages, on horseback and on foot. Log cabins, with coon-skins and hard cider, were drawn by oxen from distant parts of the state, and prominent Whigs were there from almost every country. My father as a Whig, a native of Kentucky, like Mr. Lincoln, and had served with him in the Illinois legislature, and both were re-elected members that year. And though my father lived more than a hundred miles from Springfield, he and a number of other Whigs in the vicinity of our home, were at the convention; and my father took me along. So you see I became interested in politics at an early age.

I remember that convention well, and the prominent speakers, who made speeches on that occasion. Abraham Lincoln and E. D. Baker, of Springfield; John J. Hardin, of Jacksonville; John Hogan, then a Methodist preacher, of Alton; Ben Bond, of Clinton county; Fletcher Webster, a son of Daniel Webster, then living at Peru, in La Salle county, and S. Lisle Smith, of Chicago, one of the most gifted and eloquent speakers in the state, were there. I remember them all, and heard them all speak. My father introduced me to Mr. Lincoln, and the impression made upon my mind at that time by my father and others, was that Lincoln was one of the leading, prominent Whigs and able men of the state, and he was then but 31 years of age.

I have thought it somewhat remarkable that four of those distinguished speakers whom I heard speak at that convention, were afterwards killed in battle or in time of war, while rendering distinguished services to the country. John J. Hardin was colonel of an Illinois regiment and was killed in the

war with Mexico, at the battle of Buena Vista. Baker, the eloquent orator and gallant officer and soldier, was killed at Ball's Bluff, Virginia, in the war of the rebellion. Fletcher Webster was also killed in battle in Virginia, in the same war; and Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while president of the United States and commander in chief of the army and navy, after rendering the most illustrious service to his country.

Again my father, having been re-elected as a member of the state legislature, as I have said, took me with him to Springfield when the legislature assembled in November, 1840, and I was in Springfield several weeks with him, during the session, and saw much of Mr. Lincoln and heard him speak a number of times. He was one of the prominent members of the house, and was recognized as one of the able, if not the ablest, of the Whig leaders and debaters in the house. And there were many other able men, members of the house, who were afterwards distinguished in the public service. William H. Bissell, whom we elected governor in 1856; Lyman Trumbull, John Dougherty, Thomas Drummond, John J. Hardin, John A. McClernand, John Logan, father of John A.; ex-Attorney-General Kitchell, and many others, were able and prominent members, and Lincoln was, I think, as prominent as any of those mentioned.

I may put a higher estimate on the ability and prominence of Mr. Lincoln at that time, than some others do, and it may be very natural that I should; for I was a Whig, and a little later, when I became a voter, and interested in politics, I was associated with him, politically, and followed him as a leader, and always regarded him as a strong and able man. When a member of the legislature in 1855, I voted for him nine times for United States senator, and on the tenth ballot I changed my vote, somewhat unwillingly, and voted at Mr. Lincoln's own request, for Lyman Trumbull. We could not get our old friend, Senator Palmer, to vote for Lincoln, once (Senator Palmer shook his head). But it is all right, senator; you came around all right afterwards, for Mr. Lincoln, and the probabilities are that if we had elected Mr. Lincoln

United States senator then he would not have been elected president—and if he had not been, what the condition of our country would be today we cannot imagine.

No, my friends, Abraham Lincoln was always a great man in my estimation, from my first acquaintance. He was great in his boyhood, in the cabin homes of his father. He was, I think, born great, and grew in greatness all his life.

A brother-in-law of mine, now dead, said to me a few years since, when standing in Statuary Hall in the capitol at Washington, and looking at the statue of Abraham Lincoln by Vinnie Ream, "Thomas, the more I study the life and character of Lincoln, and compare him with the other great men of history, the more I think he is one of the most remarkable men of all ages." And such, I think, as the ages go by, will be the judgment of mankind.

But I have rambled long enough, and must close, with many thanks for your kind attention.

Address by Honorable George Schneider

OF CHICAGO.

Mr. Davis, the president of the Historical Society, introduced Mr. Schneider, who spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I came here without any preparation to address you on such an important subject as the foundation of the Republican party in Illinois, and as I might say, in the United States. Your president made the remark, that the elements out of which the new party had been formed, consisted of members of the old Whig party with anti-slavery tendencies; of the Democratic party with even more radical views, and represented by such men as my distinguished friend, General Palmer; the American or Know-Nothing party; and the Germans, with the most advanced, anti-slavery feelings of all of them. My friend, Mr. Paul Selby, gave you the history of the Decatur convention where all these factions were represented.

Here the most difficult task did fall to me as the editor of a German paper and as a member of that convention. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise created a storm in the affairs of the country such as was never before witnessed since the foundation of the republic. The south had been made bold and defiant by the success in the affairs of the nation since the adoption of the so-called 'compromise measures.' The attempt of the nationalization of the institution of slavery, and of a most rigid Fugitive Slave law with all its horrors, had aroused the sleeping conscience of the nation.

George Schneider was born at Pirmasens, Bavaria, December 13, 1823; liberally educated; took part in German revolution, 1848; was condemned to death, escaped to the United States; with his brother established an anti-slavery German paper at St. Louis, Mo.; 1851, moved to Chicago and became the editor of the *Staats-Zeitung*, which he made a daily and the leading German newspaper of the northwest; called the first anti-Nebraska meeting in the United States; member of editorial conven ion of February, 1856, and of the convention of May 29, 1856, and of the national Republican conventions of 1856 and 1860; presidential elector, 1880; appointed by President Lincoln to confidential mission to Denmark and Germany, 1861; internal revenue collector, 1861 and 1865; member of Chicago Union Defense Committee, 1861 and 1865; appointed minister to Switzerland, 1876; twenty-five years engaged in banking in Chicago; the confidential adviser of every Republican president, from Lincoln to McKinley. (See Biographical Dic. and Por. Gal., Ill. Ed. p.30.)

When Senator Douglas introduced his bill to repeal the Missouri Compromise, this was the signal for the volcanic out-break of the pent up feelings, of the citizens of the Republic who had preserved their love of humanity, right and justice. This was particularly the case with the adopted citizens of the German nationality.

The revolution of 1848 and 1849 in Germany for the unification of the Fatherland, and the failure of this great effort, sent thousands of the best men of Germany,—men of culture and strong will power,—to this country, who were placed at the head of many of the best newspapers printed in the German language. From New York to the great west, their influence was felt at once and a great revival began amongst them. The principal places of this new uprising in thought and action were New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis. All the principal papers in these cities opposed at once the extension of slavery in the new territories, and in fact, slavery itself.

Our state was in advance of all of them and nearly every paper published in the German language in the state opposed the Nebraska bill. But here appeared most suddenly, a black cloud on the political horizon which seemed to assume such proportions and threatening form, as to not only dampen the fire of the new movement against slavery, but to drive the Germans from the ranks of the party to be formed. I refer to the so-called American, or Know-Nothing party. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, and several other important states were controlled by the new party, and this movement swept even the shores of all the middle and northwestern states. The Germans, who had just entered the new party with the only desire to oppose slavery, were in a most unpleasant and critical position, and their political future seemed dark.

I entered the Decatur convention with a resolution in opposition to this movement and I had resolved to fight with all my might and win or go down, and with me, perhaps the new party. My friend, Paul Selby, who has appeared before

HON. GEORGE SCHNEIDER.

you with his excellent and true historical address on the Decatur convention, placed me on the committee of resolutions and I had to help form a platform containing a paragraph against the proscriptive doctrines of the so-called American party. This portion of the platform raised a storm of opposition and in utter despair I proposed submitting it to Mr. Lincoln, who had appeared in the convention, and abide by his decision. Mr. Lincoln, after carefully reading the paragraph, made the following remark:

"'*Gentlemen*: The resolution introduced by Mr. Schneider is nothing new. It is already contained in the Declaration of Independence and you cannot form a new party on proscriptive principles.'

This declaration of Mr. Lincoln's saved the resolution and in fact, helped to establish the new party on the most liberal democratic basis. It was adopted at the Bloomington convention and next, at the great, and the first, national Republican convention at Philadelphia on the 18th of June, 1856. And in connection with this I wish to say that the delegation from Illinois followed the lead of General Palmer, the real 'grand old man' from Illinois. He drew up the plan of operations; he had the negotiations with President Lane and secured the proper committee on resolutions and the great success was due to his fearless and at the same time prudent and statesman-like action. The great majority of the Germans in all the states of the north, and even in some portions of the south, entered the new party that had made Lincoln president, and made it possible to carry on the war with success against slavery, and create, in fact, a new Union. The new light which appeared at Decatur and Bloomington, spread its rays over the whole of the United States, and so the regeneration of the Union and the downfall of slavery dated from Bloomington; and the convention of which we hold today this memorial convocation of the few survivors, makes one of the great epochs in the history of the country; and with all this we must think of the man who has been sent by Providence to carry this nation through the agi-

tation of war to its present high position, amongst the nations of the earth, and I wish in conclusion to say of him; he crystalized sentiment, gave it a focal point. Following his action at Decatur, at Bloomington he made his wonderful speech which certainly gave the party public form. I heard this great speech of his. He was not great in rhetoric, but his mode of speaking was new. He was full of philosophy and got into the souls of men. He produced a new manner of politics. He rose up as a prophet. That was his great force and strength. He caught the wandering thoughts of troubled men and gave them continuity, and for this he was in my judgment the builder of the party in Illinois, the state in which it first took shape and rose to national prominence.

Mr. J. O. Cunningham, of Urbana, being called upon spoke as follows:

I was present at the convention on May 29, 1856, though not as a delegate, but as an observer. I came here in the company of Mr. Lincoln, who had been in attendance upon the courts of Champaign and Vermilion counties during weeks previous. At that time the only way of reaching Bloomington from the eastern counties, by public conveyance, was by way of the Wabash railroad to Decatur and by the Illinois Central railroad to Bloomington.

A number of delegates and others from the eastern counties, mostly young men, happened on the Wabash train with Mr. Lincoln and arrived at Decatur about the middle of the afternoon. No train coming to Bloomington until the next morning, made it necessary that we spend the afternoon and night at Decatur. The afternoon was spent by Mr. Lincoln in sauntering about the town and in talking of his early experiences there twenty-five years before. After a while he proposed going to the woods then a little way south or southwest of the village, in the Sangamon bottoms. His proposition was assented to and all went to the timber. A convenient log by the side of the road, in a patch of brush, afforded seats for the company, where the time was spent listening to the playful and familiar talks of Mr. Lincoln.

We spent the night at the Oglesby House, at Decatur, and early the next day a train took us to Bloomington. Mr. Lincoln was very solicitous to meet some of his old Whig friends from southern Illinois, whom he hoped to enlist in the new political movement, and searched the train to find such. He was gratified in finding some one from the south and it is believed that Jesse K. Dubois, afterwards nominated as auditor of public accounts, was the man.

Arriving at Bloomington many were found awaiting the opening of the convention, largely from the northern counties, among whom there existed a most intense feeling upon the situation in Kansas. Lawrence had been sacked but recently by the ruffianly pro-slavery men and the greatest outrages perpetrated upon free state settlers.

The evening previous to the convention Governor Reeder arrived in town, having been driven a fugitive from the territory he had been commissioned to govern, and spoke to a large crowd of listeners in the street from an upper piazza. He was moderate and not denunciatory in his address, only delineating the violence he had witnessed and suffered. Dispatches were received and often publicly read to the crowds at the hotels and on the streets and excitement over the situation was intense. No convention in Illinois ever assembled under circumstances of greater excitement.

One circumstance in the nomination of Colonel Bissell was peculiar. Long before the day of the convention there existed no doubt as to the nominee for governor. Colonel Bissell had earned a most enviable reputation as a gallant soldier in the war with Mexico and as having backed Jefferson Davis down in a dueling affair the latter had provoked with Bissell, was outspoken upon the issues most prominent in political discussions, and people had settled it before that he was to be the standard bearer in the state campaign. The temporary organization had hardly been effected when Mr. Munsell, a delegate from Edgar county, whose name has been read here today as a delegate, sprang to his feet and nominated Colonel Bissell for governor, regardless of the usage in such cases.

The people having settled this part of the business in advance, the nomination was confirmed with a yell, after which the business of a permanent organization of the convention, with General Palmer as permanent president, was proceeded with.

During the absence of the committees many speeches were made. Lovejoy (and by the way Owen Lovejoy was the greatest stump speaker I ever listened to,) Browning, Cook, Williams, Arnold and among them one Emory, a free state refugee from Kansas, all made speeches. Owing to the inflamed condition of public sentiment, the audience had become much wrought up in feeling when it came the turn of Mr. Lincoln to make his speech,—the so-called "Lost Speech." I thought it then a great speech and I now think it a great speech, one of the greatest and certainly one of the wisest ever delivered by him. Instead of adding, as he might have done, and as most speakers would have done, to the bitterness and exasperation his audience felt, as a manner of gaining control of the audience, he mildly and kindly reproved the appeal to warlike measures invoked by some who had spoken before him, and before entering upon the delivery of his great arraingnment of the slavery question and of the opposing party, he said: "I'll tell you what we will do, we'll wait until November and then shoot paper ballots at them." This expression, with his conciliatory and wise declarations greatly quieted the convention and prepared the members for the well considered platform which was afterwards presented and adopted.

This morning I received by mail from a friend what is said to have been a contribution from the Mr. Emory to a Kansas paper, giving his version of the convention and of the speech of Mr. Lincoln. I am sure this meeting will be glad to have it read here.

"I got off the cars May 28 at Bloomington. * * * I learned that the Missouri river was shut up for free-state men and that there was to be the next day a big gathering of the friends of freedom from all parts of Illinois. I here met Governor Reeder who had got out of the territory in the disguise of an Irish hod-carrier. My own home city had been sacked and our newspaper office demolished and the types and printing-presses thrown into the raging Kaw. * * * the morrow came in that Illinois town May 29, 1856. It was full of excited men—the very air was surcharged with disturbing forces; men of all parties met face to face on the streets, in the overflowing hotels and about the

depot platforms of the incoming trains. Anti-Nebraska Democrats, Free-Soil Whigs and Abolitionists were all there. There was Palmer and Lovejoy and Browning, well known names whom I had often heard of before. * * * The large hall—Major's—was crowded almost to suffocation as I took my seat on one of the rear benches. John M. Palmer was chairman and made a speech that took him out of the Democratic party for the time being. Browning was called for and he enjoined upon us 'to ever remember that slavery itself was one of the compromises of the constitution, and was sacredly protected by the supreme law.' After this, rather a cold dose to be administered just at that time, Owen Lovejoy appeared and carried the convention by a storm of eloquent invective and terrific oratory. The committee on resolutions was then announced and while this was being done I felt a touch on my shoulder when a young man said he was going to call me out to talk while the committee was out, adding that I must stop when I saw the committee come in, as it had been arranged to have "a fellow up here from Springfield, Abe Lincoln, make a speech. He is the best stump-speaker in Sangamon county.' This young man was Joseph Medill a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, as I afterward learned. I had no thought of anything of this kind, but of course I was prepared to tell the story of bleeding Kansas, there in the house of her friends. But two things bothered me all the time I was speaking; one was, I was trying to pick out Mr. Lincoln who was to follow me, for he was the best stump-speaker in Sangamon county, as I had just been told and I had never heard his name before. Added to this, was the watching I kept up at the hall doors of the committee room to be sure to have a fitting end to my rather discursive talk on that now notable occasion when the party standing for free-Kansas was born in Illinois and when a great man appeared as the champion of the Kansas cause * * * As I stepped aside, Mr. Lincoln was called for from all sides. I then for the first time, and the last, fixed my eyes on the great president. I thought he was not dressed very neatly, and that his gait in walking up to the platform was sort of swinging. His hair was sort of rather rough and the stoop of his shoulders was noticeable; but what took me most was his intense serious look. He at once held his big audience and handled it like the master he was before the people pleading in a great and just cause. Today, that 'Lost Speech' looks quite conservative; his chief contention all through it was that Kansas must come in free, not slave, he said he did not want to meddle with slavery where it existed and that he was in favor of a reasonable fugitive slave law. I do not now recall how long he spoke, none of us did, I judge. He was at his best and the mad insolence of the slave power as at that time exhibited before the country furnished plenty of material for his unsparing logic to effectively deal with before a popular audience. Men that day hardly were able to take the true gauge of Mr. Lincoln. He had not yet been recognized as a great man and so we were not a little puzzled to know where his power came from. He was not eloquent, like Phillips, nor could he electrify an audience like Lovejoy, but he could beat them both in the deep and lasting convictions he left on the minds of all who chanced as I did to listen to him in those dark days, now receding into the mystic past."

JAMES S. EMORY.

On the close of the afternoon exercises at the church the photograph of the delegates present was taken which is herewith published.

Abraham Lincoln.

Pres. Davis:

One of the delegates from Pike county was John G. Nicolay, editor of the *Pike County Free Press*, afterwards private secretary to Mr. Lincoln during his candidacy in 1860, and also private secretary to the president until Mr. Lincoln's death. He was also author of a ten-volume Life of Mr. Lincoln.

The paper on "Abraham Lincoln" has been prepared by Mr. Nicolay, but owing to ill health he is unable to be with us. His paper will be read by Mr. Prince, secretary of this society.

BY JOHN G. NICOLAY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 19, 1900.

Ezra M. Prince, Esq., Secretary McLean County Historical Society, Bloomington, Illinois.

MY DEAR SIR:—I received with great pleasure your invitation to address a meeting to be held in your city on the 29th of May, in commemoration of the Bloomington convention of 1856. I am deeply disappointed at finding myself unable to respond in person to your flattering request, but my regret is mitigated by your kind permission to send you some words of greeting by mail.

In this, the closing year of the Nineteenth Century, the anniversary celebration you have appointed, is most opportune and most instructive. It will afford the occasion to recall and record the conspicuous role which the state of Illinois was called upon to play in American politics nearly half a century ago; to review the mighty changes in national thought, national legislation, and national destiny which have occurred, and to

John G. Nicolay was born in Essingen, Bavaria, February 26, 1832. Came to United States in 1838. At 16 entered the office of the Pike county, Illinois, *Free Press* and while still in his minority became editor and proprietor of that paper. In 1856 became assistant to O. M. Hatch, Secretary of State of Illinois. In 1860 became private secretary of Mr. Lincoln and remained with him as his private secretary until his assassination. United States Consul at Paris from 1865 to 1869. Afterwards for sometime editor *Chicago Republican*. Marshal Supreme Court of the United States from 1872 to 1887. Author, with John Hay of "Abraham Lincoln," a history of ten volumes, the Standard Life of Lincoln.

honor the memory of the man upon whom fell the leading part in that great transformation.

I had the good fortune to be one of the delegates from Pike county in the Bloomington convention of 1856, and to hear the inspiring address delivered by Abraham Lincoln at its close, which held the audience in such rapt attention that the reporters dropped their pencils and forgot their work. Never did nobler seed fall upon more fruitful soil than his argument and exhortation upon the minds and hearts of his enthusiastic listeners. The remembrance of that interesting occasion calls up very vividly many other momentous and related events it was my priviledge to witness during the stirring years that succeeded. In the Representatives' Hall at Springfield I heard him deliver the famous address in which he quoted the scriptural maxim that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," and declared his belief that the Union could not permanently endure, half slave and half free. In the Wigwam at Chicago I heard the roll call and the thunderous applause that decided and greeted his first nomination for president. On the east portico of the Capitol at Washington I heard him read his first inaugural, in which he announced the Union to be perpetual. In the White House I saw him sign the final Proclamation of Emancipation. On the Battlefield of Gettysburg I heard him pronounce his immortal Gettysburg address. I saw him sign the joint resolution of congress which authorized the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. And once more on the east portico, I heard from his lips the sublime words of the second inaugural.

These leading incidents are but a few of the monumental mile stones that measure the career of this wonderful man. Between them, through a period of ten years, runs an easily traceable chain of cause and effect. But the chain of cause and effect, which is so clear to the readers of history forty-four years after the events, could not be seen by those of us who sat in the Bloomington convention. It was hidden by that impenetrable veil which the future hangs between every sunset and

JOHN G. NICOLAY.

its succeeding sunrise; between the old year and the new; between the century that ends, and the century to come.

We who heard Lincoln's convention speech of 1856 could not know—neither could he himself know—that it would be followed by his House-divided-against-itself speech in 1858; that the Lincoln-Douglas debates would elect him president in 1860, and that the resulting Civil War would usher in the Thirteenth Amendment. The most that the Bloomington resolutions dared to ask for was the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, the prohibition of slavery in all the territories, and the immediate admission of Kansas as a free state. Such was the bewilderment of public thought—such the party antagonisms of the past—such the uncertainties of the future, that the Bloomington convention only called itself an Anti-Nebraska organization, and even the Philadelphia convention which three weeks later nominated Fremont, did not yet adopt the Republican name, either in its call or in its platform.

Unfortunately the fifty speeches which Lincoln made in the Fremont campaign were never put in print, and we therefore have no record of his observations on the weather-signs of approaching politics, except that the election of Governor Bissell rendered Illinois a prospective Republican state. It required two years more to afford a clear outlook on the political situation which was developed, first in the election of Buchanan, second in the reactionary dictum of the Dred-Scott decision, and third in the astounding contrivances of the Lecompton Constitution. By these events, the slavery question revealed itself in entirely new aspects, and Lincoln was the first and only man in the United States who correctly discerned and accurately defined its grave portents. In his house-divided-against-itself speech he laid down what was at once the most radical and the most conservative programme of action outlined by any American statesman, and which, though not embodied in the phraseology of the republican platform, became practically the basis of thought, of discussion, and of decision by the whole body of American voters. Territorial prohibition or

popular sovereignty, the admission of Kansas, or the senate balance of power, were no longer vital problems. All the previous four years' discussion, oral and printed, had become empty breath and waste paper. The whole field of conflict was changed. The fight was no longer to be waged in the halls of congress, or on the plains of Kansas. There remained but two real and authoritative contestants, one, the voice of the supreme court, the other, the voice of the people. Let the supreme court decide that the states were powerless to prohibit slavery, and let public opinion accept the decision, and controversy was necessarily at an end, and the nationalization of slavery complete and final.

Against this consummation there was but one effectual safeguard; an appeal must be taken from the dictum of the supreme court to the conscience of the nation. Not alone must the spread of slavery be arrested, but the public mind must be restored to the belief that the institution was in course of ultimate extinction. That was the starting point of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates, in which the discussion ranged over a multitude of collateral points, with a skill in forensic battle that has rarely, if ever, been equaled. But the very pith and marrow of the debate was exceedingly simple. Douglas devoted all his ability to show that if the people of a territory or state wanted slavery, they had a right to have it. Lincoln, on the contrary, little by little forced the discussion to a demonstration that even if they did want slavery, they had no right to have it, because slavery was wrong, and no people have a right to do wrong. Upon this issue, though Douglas gained the senatorship, Lincoln carried the popular vote, and made Illinois a factor in the coming presidential campaign.

This, however, was only a local result. As a matter of fact, these Lincoln-Douglas debates were widely printed and read in the newspapers, and absorbed public attention in every state in the Union to an extent never before accorded a merely state election. The larger question of slavery, so unexpectedly renewed in 1854, was gradually reaching its climax, and the short axiomatic definitions with which Lincoln lifted the ar-

gument from the level of political expediency to one of moral resposibility were eagerly accepted and remembered in the free states.

The debate indeed did not end with the senatorial contest. The doctrine of "unfriendly legislation," to which Lincoln's searching questions had driven Douglas, created a schism in the Democratic party, and the agitation went on in various forms, until Lincoln, in his Cooper Institute speech in New York once more clearly defined the pending issue:

"If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we (the north) cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they, (the south) cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask, we could readily grant if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong, is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. * * * Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories, and to overrun us here in these free states? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. * * * Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare do our duty as we understand it."

It was this clear analysis of the pending quarrel between the north and the south; this candid assertion that slavery is wrong; this firm declaration that public opinion must put it in course of ultimate extinction, which caused the nomination of Lincoln for president at Chicago, and induced the people of the free states to elect him.

In the decisive majorities shown by that election the southern leaders beheld the final verdict of public opinion. No matter what compromises they might break; no matter by what force or fraud they might restore their senatorial balance of

power; no matter how many Dred-Scott decisions they might obtain; no matter how many John Browns they might hang; their institution was doomed. The election declared with unmistakable emphasis that slavery was wrong and must be put in course of ultimate extinction. In blind anger and desperate defiance eleven southern states *seceded* and began Civil War, and tried to justify their course by the candid declaration of Alexander H. Stephens that their confederate government was built on slavery as its corner-stone. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, with the irresistible fiat of war, and the thirteenth amendment, with the omnipotent voice of the people, swept away that corner-stone, and the confederate government fell.

If, in the Bloomington convention of 1856, we were called upon to deplore that an eminent citizen and senator of Illinois had so prominent a share in repealing the Missouri Compromise, and renewing the slavery contest, we in this commemorative meeting of 1900 may proudly rejoice that another eminent Illinoisian, president of the United States, corrected the error and brought the problem to a real and permanent finality.

Very truly yours,

Jno. G. Nicolay.

The Whigs and Whig Leaders of Illinois.

Pres. Davis:

Two of the members of the convention were Dr. Thomas Worthington, delegate from Pike county, and Isaac L. Morrison, delegate from Morgan county. At the request of the committee Mr. Morrison has prepared a paper on "The Whigs and Whig Leaders." Mr. Morrison has prepared his paper, but on account of ill health is unable to be present; but the son of Dr. Worthington, who is also the son-in-law of Mr. Morrison, is present and will read Mr. Morrison's paper.

I introduce to you Hon. Thomas Worthington, of Jacksonville.

By Isaac L. Morrison, Jacksonville, Ill.

"The Whigs and Whig Leaders of Illinois" has been suggested as a theme for consideration in connection with the present occasion. To properly portray "The Whig Leaders of Illinois" would require "the pen of a ready writer." I do not pretend to have that power.

This assemblage has been convened for the purpose of commemorating a political convention held in the city of Bloomington forty-four years ago today. The two great political parties existing in the United States had been known, the one as the Democratic party, the other as the Whig party, for about twenty-five years preceding that date. There were distinctive principles of political economy, that of the Whig party being in favor of the principal of protection, the Democratic party opposed; and the ever present question of slavery presented itself.

The Democratic party had been in control of the state of Illinois for many years next preceding the holding of this convention. The Whig party was a minority party in the

Isaac L. Morrison, lawyer and legislator, born in Barren county, Ky., 1826. Was educated in the common schools and the Masonic Seminary of his native state. Admitted to the bar and came to Illinois in 1851, locating at Jacksonville where he became a leader of the bar and of the Republican party, which he assisted to organize as a member of its first State convention at Bloomington, in 1856. He was also a delegate to the Republican National convention of 1864 that nominated Abraham Lincoln for the presidency a second time. Mr. Morrison was three times elected to the lower house of the General Assembly (1876, '78 and '82) and by his clear judgment and incisive powers as a public speaker, took a high rank as a leader in that body. Of late years he has given his attention solely to the practice of his profession in Jacksonville.—*Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois* 386.

Mr. Morrison previous to the organization of the republican party was a Whig.

ISAAC L. MORRISON.

state, and, I might say, a minority party in the United States, also.

The movement having in view the acquisition of Texas was primarily a move by the Democratic party of the south in order to acquire that territory and bring it into the Union as a slave state, thereby giving to that party increased power in the United States senate. Mr. Calhoun, while secretary of state under Mr. Tyler, instructed our minister, Mr. King, representing the United States at the Court of France, to obtain the consent, if possible, of that power to the acquisition of Texas by the United States, in the interest of slavery. Mr. Clay, the great leader of the Whig party, was opposed to the project on the ground that it would increase the slave territory of the Union. In his letter to the *National Intelligencer* on the subject, in 1844, he expressed his opposition to the acquisition of Texas on that ground, claiming that it would produce a war with Mexico, and that he was opposed to the acquisition of any more slave territory.

Mr. Webster, in a speech delivered at Niblo's Garden, elaborately argued the question to show that Texas ought not to be admitted into the Union, because of the existence of slavery within her boundaries. Mr. Van Buren, in his letter to Mr. Hemmert, of Mississippi, declared himself opposed to the acquisition of Texas at that time, and opposed to the extension of slavery. It was this letter, written and published by him, which lost him the nomination by the Democratic party in the convention of 1844. He had a majority of that convention in his favor, but was unable to obtain a two-thirds vote under the rules of the Democratic party, and was, therefore, defeated. Mr. Polk was an advocate of slavery and in favor of admitting Texas into the Union as a slave state. He was nominated by that party and elected to the presidency of the United States.

The Whig party was then opposed to the extension of slavery and all but three of the Whig senators in congress from the "Free States" voted against the admission of Texas. Texas, however, was admitted as a slave state.

In 1848 Mr. Webster declared that the Whig party was the "Free Soil" party of the Union. He objected to the Whig party being absorbed by the "Barn burners' Party" of New York, because, as he said, it would put Mr. Van Buren at the head of the Whigs.

Mr. Seward, in a speech delivered in October, 1848, at Cleveland, urged the Western Reserve people of Ohio to vote for General Taylor on the ground that he represented the "Free Soil" party.

The legislature of the state of Illinois in 1849 passed a resolution instructing our senators and requesting our representatives in congress to vote against any and all legislation favorable to the introduction of slavery into any of the territory acquired from Mexico by the treaty of Guadaloupe Hidalgo. Every Whig elected to that general assembly voted for the passage of that joint resolution, and a sufficient number of Democrats joined them in the vote to pass it. The Whigs of Illinois were thereby committed to the doctrine of "Free Soil," so far as a unanimous vote of their members of that general assembly could commit them. Mr. Clay, in a speech in the United States senate in March, 1850, defining the resolutions introduced by him with a view to a compromise of the questions then under consideration, declared that no power on earth could compel him to vote to introduce or extend slavery into territory then free.

The discovery of gold in California and the great rush of people to that territory, soon increased its population to such an extent as to give it a claim upon the United States government for admission into the Union under a state organization. A convention was assembled there, without an enabling act by Congress, and a constitution was framed and adopted by the people, representatives elected and senators appointed, and application made to the Congress of the United States for admission.

By the admission of Texas, the slave power gained two senators, but by the admission of California so soon thereafter, the power thus gained by the south was neutralized by

senators from the "Free State." The Democratic party opposed the admission of California. The question was finally settled for the time being by the admission of California as a state, with a constitution prohibiting the introduction of slavery, by the abolition of the slave trade within the District of Columbia, and by the passage of the Fugitive Slave law. This law, hateful in all its provisions, was demanded by those interested in slave property, on the ground that the constitution of the United States provided for such legislation. It was very unpopular with the Whigs in the "Free States," and was claimed to be unconstitutional because it provided that the fugitive arrested might be taken back by his captor to the state in which it was claimed he belonged, without the formality of a trial by jury. The administration was democratic, the judges were appointed by a democratic president, and the law was held constitutional.

This legislation had a very strong tendency to force the Whigs in all the free states to a united opposition to the extension of slavery. Compromises are frequently said to be objectionable as a confessed departure from principle; but it may well be doubted whether it was not the part of wisdom for the Whigs, under the leadership of Mr. Clay and others, to concur in these measures; because it is believed that had the extreme southern element then made the attempt to bring about the disruption of the Union, as had frequently been threatened, it was extremely doubtful whether the sentiment in the Free States could have been so far consolidated as to have successfully resisted the attempt. At any rate after the passage of these resolutions, the Democratic party in its platform of principles, in 1852, declared explicitly that the compromise measures finally settled the slave controversy. That platform was a distinct pledge to the people of the Union that the agitation of the slavery question was to cease.

The resolutions passed by the Whig convention of that year were not sufficiently explicit in expression to satisfy either wing of the party. They were a little too strong to suit the Whig party in Kentucky and other southern states that had

before that time been controlled by the Whig party, and they were not sufficiently strong and explicit to satisfy the Free Soil Whigs of the Free States. The consequence was that they did not attract to their support the people in either section. General Pierce was elected by an overwhelming majority. The people seemed to be inclined to accept the situation. They desired rest and quiet. It was therefore apparently unexpected by the public at large that the question of the claims of slavery should be precipitated so soon thereafter. The introduction of a bill into congress organizing the territory west of Missouri and of Iowa into the territory of Nebraska, and that by a northern senator, with the proposition to repeal the Missouri restriction, produced a profound sensation. The Missouri Compromise had been in force for about thirty-five years, and had been regarded as an explicit and sufficient guarantee that it was legally impossible ever after for one man to buy or sell another within the territory belonging to the United States lying north of 36 degrees, 30 minutes, and west of Missouri. However, the majority in congress pushed the matter until the bill, eventually taking the form of the organization of Kansas into one territory and Nebraska into another, was passed, and the Missouri restriction repealed. The doctrine had been advanced during the discussion of the compromise measures that by the force of the constitution itself, slavery had the right to enter any territory of the United States, and that congress had no power to prohibit it; and that therefore the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional and void. The effect of this legislation was to arouse in the Free States an anti-slavery sentiment. The Whig party did not disorganize in Illinois in the political campaign of 1854, although there were divisions in its ranks in various localities.

The campaign of 1854 was conducted by the opponents of the Democratic party as an Anti-Nebraska party; that is to say, in opposition to the administration of President Pierce and to the demands of the slave power. The election that fall resulted in the choice of a majority of the members opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska bill, opposed to the Democratic adminis-

tration, and in favor of Free Soil. A great majority of the Whig leaders in the state supported the Anti-Nebraska movement. There were some leading Democrats, however, elected to the general assembly, gentlemen who had stood high in the counsels of the Democratic party, who were in sentiment and principle opposed to the extension of slavery. Such were John M. Palmer, Norman B. Judd, Burton C. Cook, senators, besides some members of the house.

That legislature elected Lyman Trumbull to the senate of the United States. Mr. Trumbull had occupied a seat upon the supreme bench of the state; he resigned his seat, became an Anti-Nebraska candidate for congress in the Belleville district, and was elected; but before the time arrived for him to take his seat, he was elected to the senate of the United States.

The discussion of the slavery question continued to occupy public attention throughout the year 1855, and on February 22, 1856, the Anti-Nebraska editors in the state met at Decatur in convention, for the purpose of considering the best mode of conducting the Anti-Nebraska campaign. That convention was presided over by a Whig editor, Mr. Paul Selby, then of Morgan county. Resolutions were adopted, a central committee appointed, and it was recommended that a convention be held on the 29th of May, 1856, for the purpose of organizing all the forces of the state in opposition to the Democratic party. On the same day a political convention assembled at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, composed of men from the various states of the Union who were opposed to the policy of the administration of General Pierce and opposed to the extension of slavery. We might refer to some of the Whig leaders who were present in this convention, in this city, or, if not present, cooperating with the movement. There was E. B. Washburn, of Jo Daviess county, afterwards a member of congress and still later minister to France; Ira O. Wilkinson, a native of Kentucky and a circuit judge from Rock Island county; Wm P. Kellogg, of Peoria county, afterwards a member of congress; Orville H. Browning, afterwards secretary of the interior; N. Bushnell and Archibald Williams, of

Adams county; Mr. Williams was the United States district attorney under Fillmore, and was appointed district judge in Kansas by Mr. Lincoln; William Ross, William A. Grimshaw, Jackson Grimshaw, and Dr. Thomas Worthington, an original anti-slavery Whig, of Pike county; also Ozias M. Hatch, of that county, member of the lower house of the general assembly and, nominated at this convention for secretary of state; Francis Arenz, a learned German, and Henry E. Dummer, afterwards member of the legislature, then from Cass county; Samuel D. Lockwood, who came to the state of Illinois in 1818 and was on the supreme bench for nearly thirty years, whose residence was inJacksonville, Illinois, and afterwards at Aurora in Kane county. He was also a member of the constitutional convention of 1847. William Thomas, who settled in Morgan county in 1826, a native of Kentucky, served in the lower house and in the senate, and also in the constitutional convention of 1847. There was also from Morgan county Joseph J. and Martin H. Cassell, and Jonathan B. Turner, Richard Yates, David Davis, then on the circuit bench, and afterwards elevated to the supreme bench by Mr. Lincoln, Jesse Fell and Leonard Swett, of McLean county; C. H. Moore, of DeWitt county; William G. Green, a native of Tennessee from Menard county, and an intimate friend and associate of Mr. Lincoln at New Salem; Richard J. Oglesby, of Macon county; James M. Ruggles, of Mason county; Joseph T. Eckles, of Montgomery county, a member of the constitutional convention of 1847; Benjamin Bond, of Clinton county, United States marshal under Fillmore's administration; Thomas J. Henderson, of Bureau county, brigadier general in the Union Army and a member of congress; James C. Conkling, Wm. H. Herndon, William Jayne, Wm. Butler, Milton Hay, James N Brown, from Sangamon county; Shelby M. Cullom, from Tazewell county, and afterwards of Sangamon county.

Other Whig leaders did not follow or support the anti-slavery movement of the Whig party generally. Of those we might name Buckner S. Morris, of Cook county; Charles

H. Constable, of Coles county; Anthony Thornton, of Shelby; James L. D. Morrison, of St. Clair; David M. Woodson and Charles D. Hodges, of Greene county, and John Todd Stuart and Benjamin S. Edwards, of Sangamon county. Some of these gentlemen last named joined the Democratic party on the slavery question and some of them became extreme partisans in that organization.

The convention assembled at Bloomington was composed of earnest, determined, yet conservative men who had become alarmed at the demands of the slave interest in the United States, and who desired to form a compact, energetic and aggressive political party in opposition to the extension of slavery. It was not contemplated, so far as I know, nor was it claimed by any one, that the constitutional power existed to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed by force of local and positive law; but it was the doctrine of that convention that slavery was a cruel wrong and a mistaken policy, and ought not to be permitted to extend into other territory. And it was believed that to circumscribe it within the boundaries where it then legally existed would have a direct and strong tendency to ultimately overthrow it. There was no question raised as to the name of the party at the time. That is to say, the name "Republican" was not proposed, but the effort was made to unite all earnest men who were willing to renounce former political organizations and associations and unite in the organization of a party having for its chief purpose the restriction of slavery to its then existing limitations. Colonel Bissell, a Democrat, who had commanded the Second regiment of Illinois volunteers in the Mexican War, and who had justly gained renown for the achievements of that regiment, and who had represented his state in the state legislature and in congress, was nominated for governor without a dissenting voice. General John M. Palmer, then Senator Palmer, was elected to preside over the deliberations of the convention. Francis A. Hoffman of Cook county, was nominated for the office of lieutenant governor, and he having been found to be ineligible, John Wood, of Adams county, was substituted. Ozias

M. Hatch, a Whig representative in the legislature, was nominated for secretary of state; Jesse K. Dubois, a life-long Whig, was nominated for auditor of state. The ticket was a concession to the Whig element then forming or constituting the largest part of, the convention.

It is not possible on this occasion to enumerate or mention all the Whig leaders who took part in the movement which formed the Anti-Nebraska or anti-slavery party in Illinois. I may only mention those above named and a few others. Many of those leaders acquired national fame. Mr. Washburn as a legislator and diplomat; Mr. Judd in the diplomatic service; David Davis as a member of the supreme court, and many others who acquired fame in the military service for the preservation of the Union. Richard J. Oglesby, a gallant private soldier in the war with Mexico and a brigadier general of the Union Army, thrice elected governor of his state and once elected to the United States senate; Shelby M. Cullom, a native of Kentucky, who has served as speaker of the house of representatives in the state legislature, who has twice been elected governor of his state; has served in the lower house of congress and three times elected to the United States senate. Richard Yates, who was one of the vice-presidents of this convention, who served his county and district in the state legislature and for four years in the house of representatives in congress, who was elected governor of the state of Illinois in 1860, and whose service as the chief executive of this state in the organization of regiments sent into the field for the preservation of the Union has not been surpassed by any citizen or officer of the United States. He also served six years in the United States senate. He sleeps in a cemetery near the little city in which he spent his life from early youth. No stately shaft of bronze or marble marks his grave. His monument has been and is in the affections of more than 200,000 Illinois soldiers whom he organized into regiments at the call of their country, to uphold liberty, law and the Union.

Then there was over and above all the Whig leaders in the state, Abraham Lincoln. He did more by his speeches, by his

efforts in the promotion of the principles and interests of the Whig party and in opposition to the extension of slavery than any other member of it. His kindly sympathy for all living creatures, yet his comprehensive, steady judgment proved him to be, above all others of his time, the greatest Whig, the greatest anti-slavery advocate and the greatest man.

The party organized forty-four years ago today in the state of Illinois as the Anti-Nebraska party, soon after took the name of "Republican" party, which name it has ever since retained. The achievements of that party have been memorable in the history of the country. While it was made up of a majority of Whigs, yet it included a strong element, and many strong men, from the previously dominating party in the Union—Democracy. It had strength enough to overthrow the Democratic party at the November election in 1856 in the state of Illinois. It did not succeed in electing the Anti-Nebraska electoral ticket of that year, but it got possession of the state government. It has retained possession from that time to the present, forty-four years, with the exception of from January, 1893, to January, 1897, a period of four years.

The Whig leaders not only achieved their purpose in preventing the extension of African slavery, but they established that other distinct principle belonging to the Whigs—the principle of protection, and, by its beneficient operation in the management of the revenues of the nation, it has brought the people of the United States into an elevated and advanced position among the family of nations. The Whigs and the Whig leaders of the state of Illinois are entitled to their full share of the achievements which preserved the Union intact, crushed out that infamous institution—American slavery—and placed the whole people of the nation upon that broad and Catholic principle—"Liberty for all." The state of Illinois may well be proud of the deeds performed by the Whigs and Whig leaders of the state.

It required the signature of "A Whig Leader of Illinois," as president of the United States, to perfect the Morrill Tariff

bill, thereby carrying into full effect the long cherished principle of protection. Thus a policy was adopted which, with only spasmodic exceptions, has continued since 1862, justifying, in its results, the claims made by the Whigs for the principle which they had so long and earnestly advocated.

ISAAC L. MORRISON.

Address of Gen. John M. Palmer.

Pres. Davis:

Our next speaker it is unnecessary to introduce. Major-general in the War of the Rebellion, governor of this state, and senator in the congress of the United States, he is a man whom we all delight to honor. It is only necessary to further state that he was the president of the convention of May 29, 1856.

I have the honor of introducing Gen. John M. Palmer.

Fellow Citizens: I know that some of those present at the convention of 1856 (the forty-fourth anniversary of which we celebrate today), still survive—but they are few—some of the old friends preceded Mr. Lincoln into the "land of shadows." Of the central figures in that convention one only, Hoffman, is living; Bissell, Wood, Hatch, Dubois, Miller, (your fellow citizen) and Powell, all are gone!

And those who issued the call for the convention William B. Ogden, S. M. Church, G. D. A. Parks, T. J. Pickett, E. A. Dudley, W. H. Herndon, R. J. Oglesby, Joseph Gillespie, D. L. Phillips, Gustav Koerner and Ira O. Wilkinson and also James C. Conkling, Asahel Gridley, Burton C. Cook, Charles H. Ray, and N. B. Judd, the executive committee under whose directions the campaign of 1856 was carried on, they too have

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John McCauley Palmer, was born in Scott county, Ky., September 13, 1817. Moved to Madison county, Ill. Entered Shurtleff College, taught school, studied law, 1843 elected probate judge of Macoupin county. Member of Constitutional convention of 1847, elected to State Senate in 1852 and re-elected in 1854, as an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, cast his vote for Lyman Trumbull for United States Senator, was president of the Major's Hall convention, delegate to National convention that nominated Fremont in 1856. Presidential elector in 1860. Member National Peace Conference 1861. Col. 14 Ill. Inf. Brig. Gen. November, 1861. Major General in 1864, Commander 14 Army Corps. 1865 assigned by President Lincoln to command Military Department, Kentucky. In 1868 elected governor as Republican, in 1872 supported Horace Greely for president. 1891 elected United States Senator by democrats. 1896 gold democrat candidate for president.

gone! Others died under the flag, or in the hospitals during the Civil War, whose coming that convention faintly indicated.

The convention was created by the intense hostility of the American people to the extension of human slavery into free territories.

Both the great parties of the country had pledged themselves by the action of their national convention in 1852, to maintain the compromise measures of 1850, as a final, and satisfactory settlement of the slavery question in the United States, but the permanent success of the Democratic party was destroyed by an event which was intended to insure its predominance.

In 1854 Mr. Douglas, then a senator from Illinois, reported a bill from the committee on territories for the organization of the territory of Nebraska. In his report he said: "The prominent amendments which your committee deemed it their duty to commend to the favorable action of the senate in a special report, are those in which the principles established by the compromise measures of 1850, so far as they are applicable to territorial organizations, are proposed to be affirmed, and carried into practical operation within the limits of the new territory with a view of conforming their action to what they regard as the settled policy of the government, sanctioned by the approving voice of the American people, your committee had deemed it their duty to incorporate and perpetuate in their territorial bill the principles and spirit of those measures. If any other considerations were necessary to render the propriety of this course imperative upon the committee, they may be found in the fact that the Nebraska country occupies the relative position to the slavery question as did New Mexico and Utah when those territories were organized. It was a disputed point whether slavery was prohibited by law in the country acquired from Mexico.

On the one hand it was contended as a legal proposition that slavery having been prohibited by the enactments of Mexico, according to the law of nations, we received the

GEN. JOHN M. PALMER.

country with all its laws and local institutions attached to the soil, so far as they did not conflict with the constitution of the United States; and that a law, either protecting or prohibiting slavery was not repugnant to that instrument, as was evidenced by the fact that one-half of the states of the Union tolerated, while the other half prohibited the institution of slavery.

On the other hand it was insisted that by virtue of the constitution of the United States, every citizen had a right to remove to any territory of the Union and carry his property with him under the protection of law, whether that property consisted of persons or things.

The difficulties arising from this diversity of opinion were greatly aggravated by the fact that there were many persons on both sides of the legal controversy who were unwilling to abide the decision of the courts on the legal matters in dispute; thus among those who claimed that the Mexican laws were still in force, and consequently, that slavery was already prohibited in these territories by valid enactments, there were many who insisted upon congress making the matter certain by enacting another prohibition.

In like manner some of those who argued that Mexican law had ceased to have any binding force, and that the constitution tolerated and protected slave property in those territories, were unwilling to trust the decision of the court upon the point, and insisted that congress should, by direct enactment, remove all legal obstacles to the introduction of slaves into the territories.

Your committee deem it fortunate for the peace of the country and the security of the Union, that the controversy then resulted in the adoption of the compromise measures, which the two great political parties with singular unanimity have affirmed as a cardinal article of their faith and proclaimed to the world as a final settlement of the controversy and an end of the agitation.

A due respect therefore for the avowed opinions of other senators, as well as a proper sense of patriotic duty, enjoins

upon your committee the propriety and necessity of a strict adherence to the principles and even a literal adoption of the enactments of that adjustment, in all their territorial bills, so far as the same are not locally inapplicable.

These enactments embrace, among other things less material to the matters under consideration, the following provisions:

When admitted as a state, the said territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union, with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at their admission.

That the legislative power and authority of said territory shall be vested in the governor and a legislative assembly.

That the legislative power of said territory shall extend to all rightful subjects of legislation consistent with the constitution of the United States and the provisions of this act; but no law shall be passed interfering with the primary disposal of the soil; no taxes shall be imposed upon the property of the United States, nor shall the land or property of non-residents be taxed higher than the lands or other property of residents."

Mr. Douglas afterward offered an amendment to the bill which referred to the Missouri Compromise, and declared "which being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by congress with slavery in the states and territories as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the compromise measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void, it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any state or territory nor exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to frame and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way subject only to the constitution of the United States."

The proposition to repeal the Missouri Compromise, or declare it void, because of its opposition to the compromise measures of 1850, was received with reluctance; the people yielded to the Fugitive Slave law, only to discharge their obligations under the constitution, but when it was proposed to repeal the compromise of 1820, or to declare it inoperative

because of its supposed conflict with the compromise of 1850, they were astounded. They had accepted the compromise measures of 1850 as a supplement to that provision of the compromise of 1820, which excluded slavery from the territories of the United States north of 36 degrees, 30 seconds. No one can doubt that Mr. Douglas in his action upon the Kansas-Nebraska bill, committed the tactical mistake of his life time. He relied upon the strength of merely partisan organization. He did not understand what he afterwards found to be true, that the questions he had raised were of the most dangerous character and would destroy the Democratic party.

The language of his amendment to the Nebraska bill presented a conundrum of almost impossible solution. It declared that it was not the intention of the act to introduce slavery into any state or territory or to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to regulate their own institution in their own way, subject only to the constitution of the United States.

No man was more capable of defending this remarkable provision than was Mr. Douglas.

There is no doubt but that the Dred-Scott decision, and the assertion that congress had no right or authority to prohibit slavery in the territories of Nebraska and Kansas, gave birth to the Republican party.

It may be as well to give a few words, in explanation of the position of the Anti-Nebraska-Democrats at that time, especially as to their presence and action in the convention of 1856.

I was elected to the state senate in 1851, and attended a called session in June 1852, and voted in caucus, as well as in joint session of the two houses in 1853 for Stephen A. Douglas, as senator of the United States.

In 1853 an act was introduced by John A. Logan, of Williamson county, "to prevent the immigration of negroes into the state." See, acts of 1853, p. 57.

The subject of the action of congress on the Nebraska bill was introduced into the senate by Mr. O'Melveny, senator

from the counties of Monroe and St. Clair. At the special session of 1854, the governor had made no allusion to the subject in his message, which was devoted exclusively to state affairs. The legislature had, in the early days of the republic instructed the senators of the United States as to their votes and duties, and though Mr. Douglas had acted independently of Illinois it was thought best by his friends that he should be endorsed by the legislature of his own state; accordingly Mr. O'Melveny introduced on the 9th day of February, 1854, the following resolutions:

Resolved, By the senate of Illinois, "that the bill to form the Nebraska and Kansas territories, as presented and advocated by our distinguished Senator Douglas at the present session of congress, meets with our approbation,

Resolved, That we believe that the best interests of the Union demands the passage of said bill,

Resolved, That we call upon all Union men throughout the state to support said bill,

Resolved, That we will sustain Judge Douglas against all Abolitionists and Free-Soilers in this state so far as the provisions of his bill are concerned."

Thereupon, on the day following, I offered the following concurrent resolutions as a substitute for the resolutions of Mr. O'Melveny,

Resolved, That the Missouri Compromise, and the compromise measures of 1850, provide for a satisfactory and final settlement of the subject of slavery, and the people of Illinois in common with the citizens of all the states are pledged to maintain the same and resist and discountenance all further agitation of the question as tending to weaken the bonds of the Union, and as threatening its perpetuity and peace.

Resolved, That the compromise measures of 1850 were not intended by the framers, nor understood by the people of the United States in any manner, in letter or spirit, to weaken the prohibition of slavery in that portion of the territory of the United States from which it was excluded by the terms of the Missouri Compromise.

Resolved, That the provisions of the bill for the organization of the Kansas and Nebraska territories, now pending in the congress of the United States, so far as the same proposes to tolerate the introduction or existence of slavery in said territory, or weakens or impairs the restrictions imposed thereon by the Missouri Compromise, meets the unqualified condemnation and opposition of this general assembly, as directly exciting the elements of agitation and strife, so happily allayed by the compromise aforesaid." My resolutions were defeated.

I was at that time sincerely in favor of the Missouri Compromise, which excluded slavery from the territory west of the state of Missouri, north of the latitude of 36 degrees, 30 minutes, and I was equally sincere in my support of the compromise measure of 1850, and I felt indignant that an Illinois senator should, from the committee on territories, make a report and declare the Missouri act of 1820, void, on account of its conflict with the measures of 1850. The house was in favor of the Nebraska bill, and passed resolutions which were introduced into the senate by Mr. Davis, of Hancock county, committing the entire Democratic party to the passage of the Nebraska bill. After the adjournment of the special session of 1854, I was conscious that I had differed from my party upon the subject of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and had from that cause alienated many of the ultra pro-slavery men of the Democratic party, and I knew that I had given that class of men some evidence which they used unsparingly—to convict me of the political offense called "Abolitionism"—but I did not see, what I afterwards discovered to be true, that the slavery question would not cease to disturb the country, as long as that institution existed. I supposed that the Democratic party would again unite upon other issues, and I was mainly anxious to preserve my personal independence and the right inside the party lines, to act according to the dictates of my own sense of personal duty. Major Burke, who opposed me for a seat in the state senate in 1854 was renominated in the summer of

1854, for a seat in the house, but he preferred to make a canvass for the senate. He was a popular man and after his nomination for the senate, his course toward me was so personal, that I determined to become an independent Democratic candidate.

In a discussion at Stanton, he claimed that the states of the Union were equal and that the citizens of states, in which slavery existed, had a right to remove into the territories with their slaves and hold them, as slaves until the people, with the sanction of congress, formed a state government, when slavery might be tolerated, or excluded from the new state.

He attacked the "Popular Sovereignty" doctrine of Douglas as "illogical and absurd," which it was. I had trouble in defending myself for opposing the Nebraska bill: At that time the prejudice against "Abolitionists" was bitter and affected the minds of three-fourths of the voters. I was only remotely influenced in my course by hostility to slavery, although I avowed my opposition to the institution: I was chiefly concerned by the fact that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise re-opened the slavery question. In February, 1854, at the special session of the legislature, I had offered the resolutions heretofore copied, which at once expressed my opinions as well as my apprehensions. I reiterated the substances of these resolutions in all the speeches I made in the district and assailed Major Burke for his opposition to the compromise of 1850 and the result was, that I was elected by about two hundred majority.

I have already expressed my great regard for Mr. Douglas, and up to the time to which I refer, I regarded him as my friend—two or three weeks before the election, he came into the district and addressed the people of Greene county at Carrollton, and from that place came to Carlinville, my home. I came into Carlinville from Jerseyville, where I had attended court after sundown on the same day and hearing that Judge Douglas was at the hotel, I called upon him and we spent two hours or more, in earnest conversation of the purport, that Judge Douglas was anxious that the legislature would elect

a United States senator to succeed Gen. James Shields, I should agree to attend the legislative caucus and vote for whoever might be nominated as a candidate for senator.

On the other hand, I insisted that as I was an independent Democratic candidate for state senator, in opposition to the Nebraska bill, and especially opposed to that measure as a test of party orthodoxy, he ought to agree that the Democratic caucus should pass no resolutions favoring that measure. Our discussion was somewhat heated, both of us obstinate, and he finally said to me "You may join the Abolitionists if you choose to do so, but if you do, there are enough patriotic Whigs to take your place and elect Shields," I answered, "I will beat Burke in spite of all you can do against me. You will fix the imputation of Abolitionism upon me and by that means try to beat me. We have fought the Whigs together, you now promise yourself that they will take my place and help elect Shields, I will fight you until you are defeated and have learned to value your friends." I kept my word. I think Judge Douglas had no more active, or earnest political enemy than I was from that time until I met him in Washington in February, 1861.

After the November election in 1854, I saw Mr. Lincoln frequently and told him that I was elected as an Anti-Nebraska Democrat and could not vote for him but would be compelled to vote for a Democrat.

When the legislature met in 1855, the Anti-Nebraska Democrats were represented by Judd, Cook, Baker, Allen and myself; we held a separate caucus. Among the names considered by us for United States senator were those of Underwood, Judd, Cook, Ogden, Williams and Trumbull, but we finally selected Trumbull, and I placed him in nomination in the joint session. He received but five votes on the first ballot. After several ballots Mr. Lincoln came into the hall and insisted that his name should be dropped and his friends should vote for Trumbull.

All but fifteen did so, and the ballot stood, Lincoln 15—Trumbull 36—and Matteson, (who had taken the place of Shields on the balloting,) 47.

As the next ballot was called, Judge Stephen T. Logan, Lincoln's close friend, arose and announced the purpose of the remaining Whigs to vote for Trumbull, which they did, he receiving fifty-one votes, just enough to elect him. General Henderson did vote for Mr. Lincoln, "nine times" but at the suggestion of Judge Logan, voted for Trumbull.

We kept our faith with Mr. Lincoln three years afterwards, for when Elihu B. Washburn came to Springfield in 1858, as a messenger from Horace Greeley and proposed to drop Mr. Lincoln and take up Mr. Douglas for senator, we, the Anti-Nebraska Democrats opposed him and in June, 1858, we concurred in the declaration that Mr. Lincoln was the nominee of the Republican convention as its "first and only candidate for senator."

There is no doubt that the Dred-Scott decision, and the assertion that congress had no right to prohibit slavery in the territories of Nebraska and Kansas, gave birth to the Republican party.

The men who attended the convention of 1856 were sincere and earnest in their opposition to the extension of slavery into free territories. They were "anti-slavery men" but they conceded the right to the states where slavery existed by law, to maintain it. And such were the opinions of the Republican party until Mr. Lincoln, in the exercise of the war power proclaimed the Emancipation of the slaves in all but the excepted states. And I had the satisfaction of "driving the last nail into the coffin of slavery" while commanding the Department of Kentucky in 1865-66.

The convention passed resolutions that,"Congress possessed the power to abolish slavery in the territories, and should exercise that power to prevent its extension into territories heretofore free;"

"Opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise," and in "favor of making Kansas and Nebraska free states."

In the afternoon preceding the assemblage of the convention, Gen. John T. Farnsworth and I delivered speeches

from the steps of the Pike House; General Farnsworth had been a Democrat.

Mr. Lincoln, who was a member of the committee to report nominations to be ratified by the convention, made a speech before the convention, which was of marvelous power and force and fully vindicated the new movement in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and then the convention adjourned.

In 1860, we were true to Mr. Lincoln, and Mr. Judd was chairman of his campaign committee in this state.

In securing Mr. Lincoln's nomination in 1860, three of your fellow citizens, Judge David Davis, Jesse W. Fell and Leonard Swett, were the recognized leaders of the Lincoln forces, Judge Davis, by common consent, being the commander-in-chief.

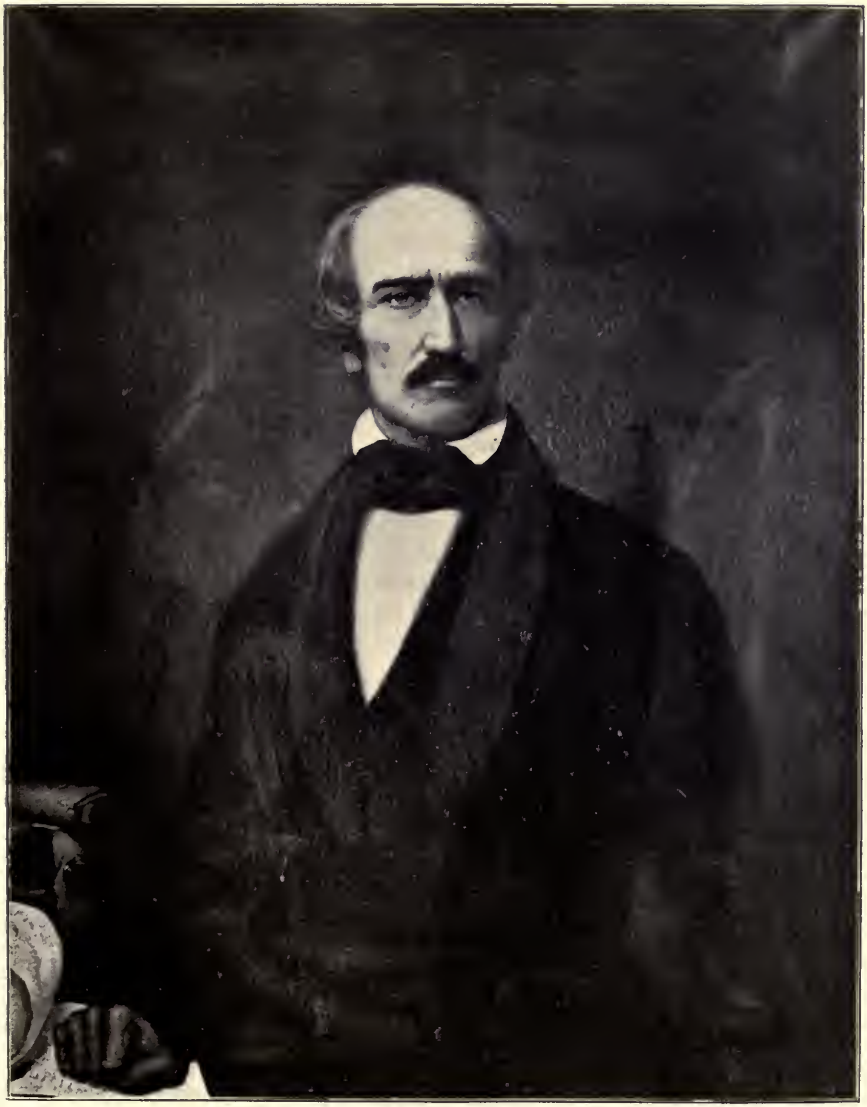
Gov. William H. Bissell.

Col. Bissell, the nominee for governor at this convention, died a few weeks before the expiration of his term of office. The great event of the war of the rebellion and the great names of Lincoln, Grant, Palmer, Yates, Logan and the other Illinois heroes of the war of the rebellion have overshadowed the fame of one of the best and noblest of our Illinois governors of whom we have only very meagre accounts. At the request of the Historical Society Mr. Frank Elliott, of Evanston, Illinois, has prepared for this book the following sketch of Gov. Bissell.

WILLIAM H. BISSELL.

FRANK M. ELLIOTT, OF EVANSTON, ILL.

The name of Governor Bissell is not a familiar one to the politician of today, but if any young student wishes to place before him the conditions existing in the period just before our Civil War; if he wishes to know of the intense hatred and the political devotion to parties of those days, he will nowhere



GOV. WILLIAM H. BISSELL.

find them more dramatically set forth than in the life of Governor Bissell. Within this brief sketch there can only be an outline of the principal events of the life; a life in which were mingled thrilling deeds and the pathos of a long continued illness.

In the days when he played his part in the political campaigns of this state, there were few great newspapers and stenographic reports of speeches were rarely made. Only the briefest mention is found of current events.

There are no biographies of Governor Bissell and all the sketches of his life are short and fragmentary. A few facts only are dwelt upon and nothing like a full and careful review of his life has been written. The information concerning him is scattered and is mostly hidden away in the files of old newspapers. There is a wealth of material in connection with him that is worthy of attention.

It is hoped there may be a renewed interest in the life of this gifted man and that the fugitive information wherever it may be found will be collected and form the basis of a biography worthy of so distinguished a citizen and official of Illinois.

William H. Bissell was born at Hartwick near Cooperstown, New York, on April 25, 1811. His parents were poor and he experienced many of the hardships and deprivations which slender means imposed. Thus it was that he was denied the usual educational advantages, except an occasional attendance of a summer school. As soon as he was able he himself became a teacher taking schools during the winter seasons. His habits were ever studious and thoughtful from his youth and every spare moment he utilized in reading and studying such books as he could lay hands on. His education was largely self-imposed and acquired. The experience of these early years laid the foundation and prepared him for the success and trials which were in store for him in later life. His industrious self-culture and life-long endeavor to enrich his mind and improve his natural powers prepared him for every opportunity that crossed his pathway.

In selecting a profession he found that of a physician most inviting, accordingly he bent his energies to the study of medicine, soon finding it possible with what he had earned in teaching to attend the Philadelphia Medical College. In 1835 he received a diploma from that institution. Returning to that part of the country most familiar to him he commenced the practice of medicine at Southport in Chemung county, New York. After two years he removed to Painted Post in Steuben county of the same state. But the desire to go west came to him as it had come to many of the young men of the east, and not having the money for such an extended journey, he managed through a friend to borrow enough to undertake it. Times must have been hard with him for not until fifteen years later did he seek out his accommodating friend and return the money together with the interest. This debt of honor he gladly and voluntarily paid out of the first money which he received from the government after his election to congress.

In 1838 he came to Jefferson county, Illinois, but was prostrated with illness shortly after his arrival and soon exhausted his scanty means. Becoming discouraged he was only saved from enlisting in the United States army as a private soldier by his inability to pass the physical examination. Going on to Monroe county, he found an influential friend in Colonel James, who secured him a position as school teacher. He finally landed in Waterloo, where he commenced the practice of medicine. While he was attentive to his duties as a physician he had time for the political questions of the day. He displayed marked ability in this direction and was elected to the legislature as a Democrat in 1840. Here he found an opportunity to exercise his talents as a speaker and it was not long before he was considered the most eloquent and forcible debater in the house. While still a physician the desire to be something more led him to attend the courts and to consider the profession of law. Then he commenced legal studies and attended lectures at law school at Lexington, Kentucky. In a remarkable short time he was admitted to the bar. He form-

ed a partnership with General Shields and moved to Belleville, Illinois. This was to be the scene of his future work and the making of a reputation that was to carry him forward to places of honor. He remained a resident of Belleville until his removal to Springfield to assume the duties of governor.

Being appointed prosecuting attorney, he filled the office with great satisfaction to his constituents and with much perturbation to the criminals who were tried under his direction. As if by magic he leaped into fame as a prosecutor. "He seldom failed to convict." The Hon. Joe Gillespie said of Bissell after hearing him in an impassioned speech at the close of a murder trial: "I realized then to its fullest extent, the power of language in the mouth of a master over the feelings of mankind. If that effort had been taken down and could be read by us,—of itself,—it would have made the name of William H. Bissell immortal."

When the Mexican War broke out, Bissell was one of the first to enlist. He was elected colonel of the second Illinois regiment.

The troops from Illinois started from Alton, July 17, 1846, and arrived at Mexico early in August. The first and second regiments, Cols. John J. Hardin and Wm. H. Bissell were attached to the army of the center under General Taylor and participated in the battle of Buena Vista, February 23, 1847. It lasted all day. The Mexican army of 20,000 under Santa Anna being opposed by only 4,500 Americans. General Taylor in his report of the battle bears willing testimony to the excellent conduct and the spirit and gallantry with which the two Illinois and Kentucky regiments engaged the enemy and restored confidence in that part of the field, adding: "Colonel Bissell, the only surviving colonel of the three regiments merits notice for his coolness and bravery on this occasion." The second regiment lost 62 kill and 69 wounded in this battle.

Colonel Bissell's address to his regiment on dress parade a few days after was most pathetic and affecting. His talents were highly appreciated by his fellow officers, both regular and volunteer, and especially by General Wool, Major Washington

and Capt. Thomas F. Marshall. The regiment was mustered out at Camargo, June 11, 1847.

Upon his return home Colonel Bissell became an idolized hero. His engaging manner, his eminence as a speaker and his excellent war record combined to make him exceedingly popular. He was immediately elected to the thirty-first congress and took his seat in the house of representatives on December 3, 1849.

With the same facility with which he had earlier in life mastered the subjects of medicine, law and military tactics, he soon acquired the knowledge of the rules and customs that governed the line of action in the house of representatives and before the end of his first term in congress was regarded as an authority on parliamentary proceedings. His first business was to familiarize himself with his new position and prepare for whatever conflict might arise in the future. This conflict came sooner than was expected to a new member. Before he had been in the house three months the opportunity was presented, and Colonel Bissell was prepared.

When Calhoun promulgated the doctrine that slavery must henceforth be the paramount issue and that the tariff which had caused the defeat of his party should be subordinated, there were few persons, not even Calhoun himself, who fully realized the strain that would be put upon our constitution, and the tragic events that would follow before that issue should be determined. It was a question how best to acquire and maintain political ascendency. The leaders of the south said it must come through slavery and this was the shibboleth emblazoned on their banner. The history of this contest, the greatest which this nation has undergone, is full of interest and admonition, and one in which all theories and schemes of peaceful adjustment were exploded and cast aside by the stern discipline of experience. It was the contest whose decision finally rested on the force of arms, arraying one section against another—the south ever the aggressor, the north the defender.

Benton, in his "Thirty Years' View," cites a paragraph written by one not without knowledge of what he was saying,

which appeared in a leading South Carolina paper. "When the future historian shall address himself to the task of portraying the rise, progress, and decline of the American Union, the year 1850 will arrest his attention as denoting and presenting the first marshaling and arraying of those hostile forces and opposing elements, which resulted in dissolution; and the world will have another illustration of the great truth that forms and modes of government, however correct in theory, are only valuable as they conduce to the great ends of all government—the peace, quiet and conscious security of the governed."

"All that was said was attempted, and the *catastrophe alone* was wanting to complete the task assigned to the future historian."

It is not our purpose to enter this subject farther than to offer a sufficient back-ground for the central figure of our sketch. Colonel Bissell, was at this time in the prime of life and in perfect health. He was about 39 years of age, tall and of delicate appearance, and carried himself with a military air. He had a clear, dark complexion, coal black hair and a modest moustache. He had keen black eyes which seemed to penetrate with deadly accuracy, and in animated conversation, or in a heated debate his whole face would assume the expression best fitted to his theme. He was not a talkative man, but when he did speak his remarks were always pertinent. He was exceedingly modest. His taciturn habits which were acquired when a country doctor, seemed always to have remained with him. He possessed to a remarkable degree coolness and self-possession, the characteristics of a man not easily intimidated. Colonel Bissell was a gifted extemporaneous speaker, full of honest common sense, who never spoke for effect, but always from conviction. His speeches are said to have been most effective in delivery. He possessed the magnetic gift of swaying his audience and of being able to carry it with him. He had a keen appreciation of facts and an unusually strong poetical imagination. He was largely dependent upon his audience for inspiration, and when this was secured he spoke with a fluency and passion that was truely wonderful.

When Colonel Bissell entered congress, he found the slave-holding element in power, and all legislation was being directed for its perpetuation. He sat in his seat and listened to the speeches which were made to fire the chivalry of the south and which with innuendo and sarcasm taunted the north with "injustice and aggression." He listened to the southerns' threat to abandon the Union and establish a separate confederacy, and was amazed. He had subscribed to the same oath of office they had taken, to support and defend the constitution and all the laws of the Union and it was incomprehensible to him, a conscientious man, one who loved his country and his flag, how these things could be. He resolved to make a reply. On February 21, 1850, he delivered his speech on the slavery question and it was regarded at the time as one of the ablest given in congress.

In the introduction he expressed his reluctance to add to the public anxiety which this discussion had already produced. It was his "settled conviction that unless the representatives who had assumed to speak for the slave-holding states have greatly mistaken the purposes and intentions of the people of those states, war and bloodshed consequent upon an attempt to overthrow this government was inevitable." This declaration he desired should go forth to the country and with it the reasons upon which his opinion was based. He repelled the charge that the north had been constantly aggressive on the slavery question.

It was to Mr. Seddon, of Virginia, however, that Colonel Bissell, stung by his utterances, paid particular attention in the closing part of his speech.

Chittenden, in his "Recollections" has given a sketch of Mr. Seddon as he saw him in the peace conference in 1860, ten years after this debate with Colonel Bissell. "His personal appearance was extraordinary. His frame was fleshless as that of John Randolph and he was equally with that statesman, intense in his hatred of all forms of northern life. The pallor of his face, his narrow chest, sunken eyes and attenuated frame indicated the last stages of consumption. His voice, husky

at first, cleared with the excitement of debate in which he became eloquent. Notwithstanding his spectral appearance he survived to become secretary of war in the confederacy. He was the most powerful debater of the conference; skillful, adroit, cunning, the soul of the plot which the conference was intended to execute."

This picture of Seddon will aid us in understanding him as he spoke on the subject that aroused Colonel Bissell. General Taylor, although a Virginian and a slave-holder, proposed to be president of the country, rather than of his party, and he had determined to conduct his administration free from the influence of pro-slavery advocates. Mr. Seddon was making an appeal, calling upon him to remember "the trials and triumphs he had shared with the gallant sons of the south, his fellow soldiers and compatriots in the conflicts which so largely won these acquisitions." Continuing, Mr. Seddon, said:

"In the bloody trenches of Monterey, in the midst of the din and smoke of battle, again should he see valiant soldiers of the south rush on to the cannon's mouth, and mount 'the imminent deadly breach,' with their mangled bodies piling high the pedestal of his fame. And on that memorable field of Buena Vista, at that most critical juncture when all seemed lost save honor, again should his heart bound with hope as he hailed the approach of the noble regiment of Mississippians, and beheld them steady, undismayed, (through the very midst of the brave but unfortunate troops of the north, then, through a mistaken order discomfited and in rout) with souls untouched by panic and nerved to do or die, march onward—right onward on the countless foe and with invincible prowess snatch from the very jaws of death rescue and victory.

"By such proud memories—by the fame they have won and the meed of gratitude and honor they conferred, I would invoke him to cast now the weight of his deserved influence and high position on the side of the south,—in the scale of right and justice. Let him openly rebuke the mad fanaticism and grasping lust of power in the north. Let him, as when marching to the relief of his comrades at Fort Brown, determine, let foes

come in what number they may, to encounter them and march onward to the rescue of the south and her threatened institutions."

Colonel Bissell in concluding his speech said: "I must now refer to a subject which I would gladly have avoided. I allude to the claim put forth for a southern regiment, by the gentleman from Virginia (Seddon,) of having met and repulsed the enemy on the field of Buena Vista, at that most critical moment when the second Indiana regiment, through an unfortunate order of their colonel gave way. Justice to the living, as well as to those who fell on that occasion, demand of me a prompt correction of this most erroneous statement. And I affirm distinctly sir, and such is the fact, that at the time the second Indiana regiment gave way, the Mississippi regiment, for whom this claim is thus gratuitously set up, was not within a mile and a half of the scene of action, nor had it as yet fired a gun or drawn a trigger. I affirm further, sir, that the troops which at that time met and resisted the enemy, and thus to use the gentleman's own language, 'snatched victory from the jaws of defeat,' were the second Kentucky, the second Illinois and a portion of the first Illinois regiments. It gives me no pleasure sir, to be compelled to allude to this subject, nor can I perceive the necessity or propriety of its introduction into this debate. It having been introduced, however, I could not sit in silence and witness the infliction of such cruel injustice upon men, living and dead, whose well earned fame I were a monster not to protect. The true and brave hearts of many of them, alas, have already mingled with a soil of a foreign country; but their claims upon the justice of their countrymen can never cease, nor can my obligations to them be ever forgotten or disregarded. No, sir,—the voice of Hardin,—that voice which has so often been heard in this hall as mine now is, though far more eloquently,—the voice of Hardin, aye, and of McKee, and the accomplished Clay,— each wrapped now in his bloody shroud,—their voices would reproach me from the grave, had I failed in this act of justice to them and the others who fought and fell by my side.

"You will suspect me, Mr. Chairman of having warm feelings on this subject. So I have; and I have given them utterance as a matter of duty. In all this, however, I by no means detract from the gallant conduct and bearing of the Mississippi regiment. At other times and places on that bloody field, they did all that their warmest admirers could have desired. But, let me ask again, why was this subject introduced into this debate? Why does the gentleman say 'the troops of the north' gave way, when he means only a single regiment? Why is all this but for the purpose of disparaging the north for the benefit of the south? Why, but for the purpose of furnishing materials for that ceaseless, never-ending eternal theme of 'Southern chivalry?'

"We are ready to meet you now on any fair grounds and fight with you side by side for your rights and for ours; and defend those rights under the constitution from encroachment in any quarter. But, sir, we want to hear no more about disunion. We are attached to the Union,—aye, devotedly are we attached to it. We regard it as the ark of safety for the American people. We know that the realization of the hopes for human freedom throughout the world, depend upon its perpetuity. And shall we ruthlessly crush these hopes forever? Shall that beacon light which our fathers raised to cheer and guide the friends of freedom be extinguished by us? Extinguish it if you will, but know, that when you do it, the world is enshrouded in darkness more frightful than Egyptian night.

"I know the people of my state. I know the people of the great west and northwest; and I know their devotion to the American Union. And, I feel warranted in saying in my place here, that when you talk to them of destroying this Union, there is not a man throughout that vast region who will not raise his hand and swear by the Eternal God, as I now do, it shall never be done if our arms can save it. Illinois proffered to the country nine regiments to aid in the vindication of her rights in the war with Mexico. And should danger threaten the Union from any source or in any quarter in the

north or in the south, she will be ready to furnish twice, thrice, yes, four times that number, to march where that danger may be, to return when it is passed, or return no more."

Every phase of Colonel Bissell's genius in this speech was in evidence. He was keen, satirical, fervid and filled with indignation at the injustice put upon his comrades and the people of the north; his voice rang out with no uncertain tone commanding attention and the deepest interest of the entire house. The effect was something unparalleled. Colonel Bissell, before its delivery, was unknown beyond the confines of his own state; now he was known throughout the nation. Those from the north rejoicing, and extolling his virtues; those from the south denouncing him and giving vent to their anger in banal epithets.

Not since the time of Adams had any one in the house of representatives chosen to take up the gauntlet and with reasoning, ridicule and sarcasm, such as Colonel Bissell employed bid defiance to the cause of slavery and secession. It could not be permitted. The south had been insulted. The north must be crushed. Its brilliant spokesman must be humiliated. Every sentence of his speech was a fire-brand to the minds of the leaders of the south. Its effect must be extinguished and that speedily. The reference to the Mississippi regiment was particularly offensive. Jefferson Davis, a member of the senate and colonel of that regiment during the Mexican War, took umbrage at what he considered an insult cast upon his soldiers, and he forthwith sent a challenge to Colonel Bissell, which was promptly accepted. The preliminaries were left to be arranged by his friends, but under the laws of the code, Colonel Bissell had the choice of weapons. He designated the "common army musket to be loaded with a ball and three buck-shot; the combatants to be stationed forty paces apart with liberty to advance to ten paces." This determination of Colonel Bissell to fight to the death was more than was expected by the champions of southern chivalry.

The city of Washington, and in fact the whole country was put in a fever of excitement over this anticipated duel.

Those who had not known Colonel Bissell pressed forward to congratulate him and speak a word of encouragement; but he did not need encouragement. He was by nature a brave man and when honor was at stake his best blood was at the service of his country.

The story is told, that Daniel Webster hearing of the proposed duel, desired to meet Colonel Bissell and as he expressed it, "He wanted to look him in the eye." He went to the hall of the house, and was introduced. The two grasped hands heartily; the one "caught the flash from under the thunderous brow and saw a genial glow upon the face." What passed between these two great men, one the champion of freedom in the senate, and the other in the house, no one knows; but shortly afterwards Webster returned to the senate chamber and observed to one of the government officials, who knew the object of his visit,—"He will do, the south has mistaken its man."

The time for the duel was set for the 28th, and as the law prohibited dueling in the District of Columbia, arrangements were made to have it elsewhere. But, this was not to be; for the friends of Davis being alarmed at the seriousness of the affair were making strenuous efforts to patch up a peace. Late in the evening before the day set for the duel, Colonel Bissell was called upon at his rooms by President Taylor. The colonel was composed and in his usual good spirits. The president was fortunately situated to interpose in this matter, for Jefferson Davis was his son-in-law and Colonel Bissell had been under his command in the Mexican War. The president made known the object of his visit and asked Colonel Bissell if it was not possible for him to modify the language used by him at which Davis had taken offense. Colonel Bissell replied,—"that he had but done his duty in defending the Illinois regiment from the aspersions with which Seddon had assailed it, and had used only such language as expressed his honest indignation thereat. He could not and would not modify one word that he had spoken." The president sat with him in conversation till 3 o'clock in the morning and then bade him a solemn and affectionate farewell.

An amicable understanding was afterwrrds reached by which all of the original correspondence between the parties was withdrawn, and letters of a more conciliatory nature with modified statements were substituted. The letter of Colonel Bissell, however, conformed strictly to the facts as stated in his speech he neither retracted nor regretted what he had said, but again emphasized his object to disprove the false statements and to show the injustice done to his comrades in arms by Mr. Seddon.

The spirit of this letter must have given cold comfort to the redoubtable "Champion of Slavery." Senator Douglas said, "There certainly would have been a fight, and one or both of them killed, had it not been for General Taylor." Thus was closed one of the scenes in that great political drama in which was subsequently enacted with more fury and effect, the villainous attack of Brooks on Charles Sumner in the senate, felling him to the floor by repeated blows on the head with a cane; and in which later on, were to come the direful tragedy of the war between the north and south, which culminated in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. As we recall the scenes and events which took place in that stupendous drama, the men who dared in the early days to plead for the Union and the freedom of its people, rise above their contemporaries and will ever be regarded as the true patriots and heroes of our country.

Extracts of Colonel Bissell's speech were printed in the newspapers of the time, and its influence was felt throughout the nation. In 1856, the same speech was printed entire and used as a campaign document in this state. The Republicans of New York during the convass of 1858 printed large editions of Colonel Bissell's speech and scattered them broad-cast over the state. Although it had been delivered eight years before, it was still considered the best exposition of the subject and the best answer that had been made to the doctrine of secession.

This adventure of Colonel Bissell's aroused the patriotism of the whole north. It has been said, that if Colonel Bissell

had not been stricken by paralysis affecting the lower half of his body he would have been the recipient of still greater honors from the hands of a grateful people.

During the canvassing of names for the first Republican candidate for president that of Colonel Bissell was frequently mentioned. He was in hearty sympathy with the Republican party from the first, and was a firm believer in the principles upon which it was founded. His reputation as a speaker, his war record, his bravery, his commanding presence were all by recent events brought into full view of the Northern people, and his exploits for campaign purposes would have been as effective as those of Fremont, who became the nominee.

This line of thought is not introduced for the purpose of speculating on what changes would have been made in the history of those stirring or subsequent times, had Colonel Bissell been nominated, but as evidence of the high esteem in which he was held by many of his countrymen. Three times he was sent to congress and during his second congressional campaign, which followed the delivery of his speech on slavery, he received what is seldom known to have occurred before or since in this country,—the unanimous vote of his district something over fifteen thousand votes.

When someone suggested to Lincoln that there was a movement to have him nominated for governor, he replied, "I wish to say why I should not be a candidate. If I should be chosen the Democrats would say, 'it was nothing more than an attempt to resurrect the dead body of the old Whig party.' I would secure the vote of that party and no more and our defeat would follow as a matter of course. But, I can suggest a name that will secure not only the old Whig vote, but enough Anti-Nebraska Democrats to give us the victory. That name is Col. William H. Bissell." This was before the convention of editors held at Decatur, Illinois, February 22, 1856. The political sagacity of Lincoln was never better illustrated than in this selection of Colonel Bissell. The state had been in the hands of the Democratic party since the time when Edwards made his independent and successful campaign for gov-

ernor, nearly thirty years previous. The bitter rivalry existing between the Whig and Democratic parties would prevent any accession of votes to the new party from the Democrats unless a reformed Democrat, a Republican was nominated.

This suggestion of Lincoln's seems to have been accepted by every one, for when the Republican convention met in Bloomington on May 29, 1856, by unanimous consent Colonel Bissell was nominated for governor.

Colonel Bissell had been an invalid for three years, although from the nature of his disease no one had supposed he would be unable to perform the duties of governor, if elected. He was paralyzed in the lower portion of his body and was obliged to move about with crutches or in a chair. At the time of the notification of his nomination he frankly stated to the committee that his health was such that he could not promise to take an active part in the campaign.

The Democrats seized upon the report of his physical condition as an objection to his election. Their newspapers and public speakers emphasized and multiplied the rumors of his malady. Exaggerated reports were made that his mind as well as his body was seriously affected and that he had no less trouble than softening of the brain. One can imagine the prejudicial deductions which could be formed on information of this kind. How could he perform the executive duties of this high office? He would be a tool in the hands of unscrupulous politicians. Certainly a sorry person to occupy the gubernatorial chair. The campaign was one of the most exciting that had ever taken place in this state, for in addition to the local interests there was above all the Kansas-Nebraska question, the key note of the *national campaign*.

The Republican managers became alarmed at these assertions of the Democrats and they realized that there was great danger of Bissell's defeat and of the defeat with him of the Republican ticket in this state. If he could only be brought before the people, it could be shown that his mind was as active and as clear as in his palmiest days. It was remembered that two

years before he had stumped his district delivering his speeches seated in a chair or carriage and was elected to congress by a large majority. But now he was too ill even to be present at any of the political meetings. Time and time again it had been advertised that he would be at the meetings and in every instance he had been unable to attend. The Democrats took advantage of these failures and emphasized the danger of electing a man who could not be depended upon. Something had to be done.

There were long and anxious meetings of the Republican managers. It was finally decided to have him make a speech. This speech should then be dwelt upon by all the Republican speakers through the state. This speech would treat of the issues of the campaign in a lucid and commanding style, showing that Colonel Bissell had lost none of his eloquence or his ability to form stately periods. This, it was conjectured, would be proof positive that though unable to perambulate he was still in possession of his mental faculties, and that his voice could ring out as clear and commanding as on the plains of Mexico. The meeting was held at his home in Belleville. There were speakers from other parts of the country. Colonel Bissell reclined in a chair on a plaform surrounded by friends and neighbors. There was much enthusiasm as he commenced and this enthusiasm continued in one form or another throughout the entire speech. There was so much of it, together with other noise and confusion that not many of the audience could distinguish a word that was said. The Republican speakers then went through the state and at every opportunity spoke of this wonderful speech of Colonel Bissell's; that it took an hour to deliver, etc. Then followed the significant and unanswerable argument that a man who could make such a speech was certainly not afflicted with softening of the brain,—that the stories of his mental unbalance were untrue and were maliciously circulated. In view of the statements, made in his speech, logically and coherently put together, there was no doubt of Colonel Bissell's ability to perform the duties of governor should he be elected. This strata-

gem had the desired effect and completely silenced the attacks of the Democrats on this point. It was the only speech made by him during the campaign.

It was during this campaign that his, not altogether fortunate experience with Jefferson Davis in congress, was revived and assumed an entirely different aspect. Under the constitution of 1848, in addition to the customary oath the following oath was required from all persons elected or appointed before entering upon their official duties: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm as the case may be) that I have not fought a duel, nor sent or accepted a challenge to fight a duel, the probable issue of which might have been the death of either party, nor been a second to either party, nor in any manner aided or assisted in such duel, nor been knowingly the bearer of such challenge or acceptance since the adoption of the constitution, and that I will not be so engaged or concerned directly or indirectly in or about any such duel during my continuance in office, so help me God." Another section of the constitution makes any person ineligible to any office of honor or profit in this state who have fought a duel or who shall have sent or accepted a challenge.

The pro-slavery papers made a terrible out-cry against Bissell for having accepted a challenge from Davis. They claimed that if he should be elected and took this oath of office he would become a perjurer. He could not deny accepting the challenge; he could not omit or modify the oath of office, and it seemed as if the Democrats had made out a good case. But, it was soon discovered that Colonel Richardson, who was running against Bissell on the Democratic ticket had been engaged in a number of "affairs of honor" at Washington, acting as second and in other ways was openly violating the prescribed oath. Should he be elected, he too would become a perjurer after subscribing to the oath. Notwithstanding this fact, the attacks on Colonel Bissell were viciously and outrageously continued. Papers like the *"Chicago Times," "Springfield Register,"* and the *"Quincy Herald"* were relentless. Instigated by Douglas, Don Morrison, Richardson and other Democratic leaders, they

employed every sort of political mud-slinging to besmirch, if possible, the character of Bissell. When we read the accounts of that canvass in the newspapers we shudder at the thought that such methods of personal attack and villainy were ever permitted. It expressed to a pitiful degree the intensity of party feeling and strife in that campaign. However, with all this abuse the people for the Union and for freedom remained firm and loyal to their cause and carried Colonel Bissell with the state ticket in office by nearly 5,000 majority.

Now, that Colonel Bissell was duly installed and had taken the oath of office as governor another event occurred which brought this duel again to notice. It seemed to pursue him like an evil demon.

In the closing part of his inaugural message to the general assembly he refers to the subject then uppermost in the minds of the people as follows:

"The question of the extension of slavery into our new national territory, although not forming any part of state politics, was nevertheless so prominent a feature in the late canvass as to create the expectation perhaps, that I should on this occasion say something concerning it.

"Up to the time of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise I had ever considered the existence of slavery with the United States as an *anomaly* in our Republican system, tolerated by necessity springing from the actual presence of the institution among us when our constitution was adopted.

"The provisions in the constitution for a slave basis of representation and for the reclamation of fugitives from labor, I had supposed, and still suppose, were admitted there upon the necessity and that such were also the views of a vast majority of the American people both north and south, I had until the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, never doubted.

"But the introduction, progress and passage of that measure, together with the course of argument made to sustain it, forced me reluctantly to the conclusion that if finally successful slavery is no longer to be considered or treated as *anomalous* in our system, but is rather thenceforward to be a leading and

favorite element of society, to be politically recognized as such, and to which all else must bend and conform.

"This conclusion is strengthened not a little by the subsequent administration of the measure in the same hands which originated and matured it. Considering that we are an intelligent people living in an enlightened age and professing the peaceful doctrines of Christianity, and a love of liberty above all things earthly, it may be well doubted whether when the world's history shall have been written to its close, it will contain a more extraordinary page than that which shall record the history of Kansas in 1855 and 1856.

"Forced to the conclusion stated a large portion of our fellow-citizens, myself among them, have resisted the consummation as we best could; and believing that not the fate of the negro alone, but the liberties of the white man,—of all men, are involved in the issue, we shall continue to resist according to our best ability.

"In doing this we shall ever be careful neither to forget or disregard the value of the Union, the obligations of the constitution, nor even the courtesies due our brethren of the south."

This extract from the message precipitated an acrimonious debate in the house, which continued for nearly seven days. Following the usual precedents a motion was made to print 20,000 copies, the same number voted for the message of Governor Mattison, Governor Bissell's immediate predecessor. The young man who was responsible for provoking this discussion was known as the "Ajax of the Democracy." He was earnest, honest, patriotic, unpolished, audacious, plucky and ambitious. This was the fresh period of his political life. He had a certain kind of coarse, angular ability (often misdirected,) which only the rough usages of experience could, and did develop and refine. John A. Logan was a member from Franklin county; he moved an amendment to print 10,000 copies of the inaugural message. He occupied much of the time in a fruitless and vain-glorious effort to prove Governor Bissell's ineligibility to office and his quasi or real perjury or perfidy in taking the necessary oath.

All the stock arguments used in the recent campaign were again "threshed over" and were made to do service for both parties.

Mr. Arnold made the principal speech in defence of Governor Bissell. Rising above the personalities in which Logan attempted to entangle him,—in a dispassionate, dignified and logical manner, he reviewed the arguments of the opposition. He disposed of Mr. Logan in a brief sentence, he said, "Governor Mattison shows that a man may be a party man without ceasing to be a gentleman. Sir, I commend the example of Governor Mattison to the consideration of the member from Franklin."

Governor Bissell could not be justly charged with having violated the spirit or strict interpretation of the constitution. His adventure with Jefferson Davis had taken place outside of the state.

This fierce and long debate was finally terminated and the Democrats being in the majority, the motion by Mr. Logan by a strict party vote was carried. It was done for political effect and Governor Bissell was duly installed in office and could not be ousted; about the only gratification the Democrats derived from the debate was the irritation and ill-feeling engendered by it. Governor Bissell lost none of his popularity by the calumnious assault, but on the contrary gained the sympathy and esteem of many persons who believed he had been unfairly and unjustly treated.

It has been said that the legislature met as a mob and ended in a rout. The Democrats were in the majority and everything that could be done, was done to humiliate the executive, to deny to him the usual rights and privileges of his office. An apportionment bill had been introduced by the Republicans based on the census of 1855. The population of Illinois had increased 447,781, nearly one-third of her entire population in five years. This increase was largely in the northern part of the state, where the Republicans were the dominant party. This bill was most stubbornly resisted by the Democrats who offered a substitute. The latter practically

disfranchised 70,000 voters of the state. The Democratic bill was passed near the end of the session and was sent to the governor for his signature. At the same time there were many other bills sent to the executive for approval, among which was the appropriation bill. It was the intention of Governor Bissell to approve the latter and veto the apportionment bill, but by an oversight the reverse took place. When it is known how large was the number of bills to be passed upon toward the close of the session, no one will be surprised that this accident should have occurred.

On February 16, 1857, there were 154 acts approved by Governor Bissell, on February 17, 43 acts and on February 18, 149.

As soon as the mistake was discovered the governor recalled the Apportionment bill and attempted to correct the error by erasing his name; this led to a determined fight which continued till the final adjournment of the legislature late in the night. The Democrats carried this question by mandamus to the supreme court to determine its validity. That tribunal gave them an adverse opinion. The court held that while a bill is in the possession and control of the executive within the period limited by the constitution it has not the force of law, and he may exercise a veto power and so return to the house where it originated with his name erased, notwithstanding he had once announced his approval of it. Governor Bissell was thus vindicated although the result was accomplished by tremendous anxiety and effort.

Lincoln once said, "that honest statesmanship was the employment of individual meannesses for the public good." It was Governor Bissell's misfortune to demonstrate, that he was according to this definition, an honest statesman; for of all the legislatures that an executive in this state has had to cope with, those of 1857 and 1859 were the meanest and most exasperating.

"In the annals of this state no public man was ever subjected to contumely so gross, abuse more harrowing, or pursued with malice more vindictive; and that these cruelties caused Governor Bissell many a heart pang, casting a shadow

over his exalted position, is not a foreign inference." It was his fate to be ever fighting with large odds against him. His mind seemed to clear and to act with unerring judgment and brilliancy in the midst of danger or exciting debate. A less able or courageous person in like circumstances would become disconcerted. Such situations, however, acted as a stimulant to his mind and brought out the very best in him. In this particular, more than in any other, reposed the elements of his greatness.

He would not knowingly provoke a controversy except to establish a principle An impartial and just consideration of his life cannot fail to ascribe to him those superior virtues, patience and kindness. "He forebore long ere he raised his hand to parry an assault." Although suffering from a long and incurable disease, he was never known to murmur or complain. Heinrich Heine was paralyzed in much the same way as Governor Bissell but the cause in his case lay in his own excess and evil habits. He, always despondent and complaining; full of remorse cried out in his despair; "That man was no longer a two-legged god; that he was no more a divine biped." Governor Bissell on the contrary, conscious only of his affliction the result of an accident when a boy, had none of that torture of mind. With the same fortitude which characterized General Grant in his last memorable illness he worked on, performing the duties of his office with a composure and a grandeur of character that was heroic.

"The man that makes character makes foes" and like all statesmen Governor Bissell made enemies and created opposition by reason of his superior talents and the fearlessness which brooked no shallowness or injustice. He was a politician and a statesman with enlarged views. Elevated on such a plane he despised demagogism. In whatever occupation he engaged he aspired by all honorable and just means to succeed, and it is not recorded in any page of our history that he failed.

In March, 1860, Governor Bissell contracted a severe cold which soon developed into pneumonia. His constitution already weakened by illness since 1853, was unable to withstand

the assault of this new enemy, and in a few days, with his mind unclouded to the last, his noble spirit passed away. He was in his forty-eighth year and had he lived nine months longer his term of office would have expired. He is the only governor of Illinois who has died while in office.

He died at a time when people were busy preparing for the political canvass which was to make Abraham Lincoln president, and which was soon to lead to the marshaling of great armies for the impending conflict which *he* had so clearly foreseen and foretold. The distinguished services which it was Governor Bissell's privilege to render in behalf of his beloved state were not forgotten. In 1867, the general assembly of Illinois in recognition of these services and as an expression of the honor and esteem which the people of this great state desired to bestow on his memory (a distinction unlike that accorded to any other man in this state except Lincoln and Logan) voted the sum of $5,000 for his monument.

In accordance with the wish of his family and the act of the legislature the remains of Governor Bissell and those of his wife were to be transferred from the Hutchinson cemetery to Oak Ridge cemetery at Springfield. In June, 1871, the monument was completed and its dedication, and the removal of the honored dead, was made the occasion of an imposing ceremony in which all the officers and members of the state and military departments participated.

Governor John M. Palmer who had known Governor Bissell for many years and who had been intimately associated with him in the political campaigns of the state, was the orator. He paid a high tribute to the character and great ability of Govenor Bissell. He reviewed many of his political achievements and accorded to him superior gifts as an orator, a patriot and a statesman. Within the span of sixteen brief years he had emerged from the obscure life of a country school teacher, gradually advancing and mastering the subjects of medicine, law, army codes and politics. In this time he had been honored by his state as prosecuting attorney, legislator, congressman and governor. Considering that all these things were acquired amid trials and much sickness; considering his hon-

orable and blameless character; that he should have risen from a position so humble by the unaided influence of his own power to the conspicuous ones which he occupied, is at once a gratifying tribute to his genius and a worthy example full of encouragement to American youth.

Speaking briefly of the Davis-Bissell episode Governor Palmer said, "Whether the acceptance of the challenge was justifiable, depends upon all the attending circumstances. The challenge was not addressed alone to Bissell but to his state and the whole north."

Official Record of Convention.

THE JOURNAL.

SPRINGFIELD, May 30, 1856.

THE CONVENTION.

(*Editorial*). "The state Anti-Nebraska Convention closed its labors last evening, its deliberations having been characterized by the greatest harmony. We surrender a large portion of our space today to an official report of the proceedings which may be found elsewhere, and will claim the attention of the reader. The ticket presented by the convention is one that combines great strength, and which it will only require an active and united effort to elect. The enthusiasm of those in attendance at the convention, and the joy with which the result of its labors has been received, gives good assurance that this effort will be put forth. We shall take early occasion to refer to the ticket more at length, and in the meantime we cordially commend it to all men opposed to the advancement of the pro-slavery party now in power."

THE NEBRASKA STATE CONVENTION.

In pursuance of the public call, the Illinois "Anti-Nebraska" state convention met in Major Hall, Bloomington, May 29,

1856, and was called to order by George T. Brown, of Madison county, on whose motion Hon. Archibald Williams, of Adams county, was chosen temporary chairman and Henry S. Baker, of Madison county was appointed secretary.

On motion of Mr. Judd, of Cook county, George T. Brown, of Madison county, was requested to assist the secretary in the organization of the convention.

On motion the secretary was instructed to call the several counties of the state, in their alphabetical order, which being done, the following delegates appeared and presented their credentials, viz:

Adams, 8 delegates—A. Williams, W. B. Powers, E. A. Dudley, Jno. Tillson, A. G. Pearson, George W. Burns, James E. Furness and O. H. Browning.

Bond, 1.—J. F. Alexander.

Boone, 2.—Luther W. Lawrence and Ralph Roberts.

Bureau, 3.—Charles C. Kelsey, George Radcliff and Geo. W. Stipp, Jr.

Calhoun, 1.—F. W. Kersting.

Carroll, 1.—D. H. Wheeler.

Cass, 1.—B. R. Frohook.

Champaign. 2.—J. W. Jaquith, Elisha Harkness.

Christian, 1.—W. G. Crosswaithe.

Coles, 4.—T. A. Marshall, A. Compton, William Glas gow and George C. Harding.

Cook, 17.—G. Goodrich, F. C. Sherman, Wm. A. James, A.H. Dolton, James McKie, Geo. Schneider, John Wentworth, C. H. Ray, J.L. Scripps, C.L. Wilson, Samuel Hoard, A. Aikin, H. H. Yates, I. N. Arnold, N. B. Judd, J. W. Waughop and Mark Skinner.

DeKalb, 3.—Wm. Patton, Wm. J. Hunt and James H. Beveridge.

DeWitt, 2.—S. F. Lewis and J. F. Lemon.

DuPage, 3.—W. B. Blanchard, S. P. Sedgwick and J. W. Smith.

Edgar, 2.—L. Munsell and R. B. Southerland.

Edwards, 1.—Wm. Pickering.

Fulton, 5.—W. P. Kellogg, Robert Carter, S. N. Breed, T. N. Hassan and H. D. Phelps.

Greene, 2.—Daniel Bowman and Joshua W. Armstrong.

Grundy, 2.—Robert Longworth and William T. Hopkins.

Hancock, 4.—John Rise, S. W. King, S. Worley and A. Simpson.

Henderson, 1.—W. D. Henderson.

Henry, 2.—J. H. Howe, J. M. Allen.

Iroquois, 3.—W. P. Pearson, J. B. Joiner, I. Bennett.

Jersey, 2.—Thomas Cummings, M. Corey.

Jo Daviess, 4.—Adolph Meyer, T. B. Lewis, H. S. Townsend, T. Spraggins.

Knox, 4.—T. J. Hale, D. H. Frisbie, Jesse Perdue, C. J. Sellon.

Kankakee, 2.—A. W. Mack, Daniel Parker.

Kendall, 2.—J. M. Crothers, J. B. Lowry.

Kane, 5.—I. A. W. Buck, S. C. Morey, G. W. Waite, A. Adams, W. R. Baker.

Lake, 3.—E. P. Ferry, N. C. Geer, Wm. B. Dodge.

LaSalle, 6.—D. L. Hough, J. A. McMillan, David Strawn, Burton C. Cook, Elmer Baldwin, C. H. Gilman.

Lee, 2.—E. M. Ingals, J. V. Eustace.

Livingston, 2.—J. H. Dart, David McWilliams.

Logan, 2.—J. L. Dugger, S. C. Parks.

McDonough, 2.—L. H. Waters, J. E. Wyne.

McHenry, 6.—S. P. Hegale, Anthony Woodspur, C. W. Craig, Wesley Diggins, Dr. Abularr, A. C. Joslyn.

McLean, 3.—James Gilmore, Sr., Dr. Harrison Noble, Wm. W. Orme, delegates, and A. T. Briscoe, Green B. Larrison, David Cheney, alternates.

Macon, 2.—W. J. Usrey, I. C. Pugh.

Macoupin, 4. (?)—J. M. Palmer, John Logan, Samuel Brown, Thomas B. Lofton, P. B. Solomon, J. D. Marshall, James Wolfe.

Madison, 8.—F. S. Rutherford, H. King, George Smith, M. G. Atwood, H. S. Baker, George T. Brown, John Trible, Gershom Flagg.*

Marion, 3.—D. K. Green, T. W. Jones, S. W. Cunningham.

Marshall, 2.—Robert Boal, J. C. Tozier.

Mason, 2.—H. O'Neal, R. P. Gatton.

Menard, 2.—M. T. Morris, George Collier.

Mercer, 2.—John W. Miles. L. W. Myers.

Montgomery, 3.—Wickliff Kitchell, J. W. Cassady, J. T. Eccles.

Morgan, 20.—R. Yates, J. W. King, M. H. Cassell, J. B. Duncan, J. J. Cassell, R. McKee, M. J. Pond, A. P. Wood, I. L. Morrison, James Green, William L. Sargeant, J. W. Strong, James Langley, E. Lusk, B. F. Stevenson, J. N. D. Stout, A. Bulkley, B. F. Ford, J. Metcalf, and J. Graham.

Moultrie, 1.—John A. Freeland.

Ogle, 3.—Charles C. Royce, F. A. McMill, G. W. Southwick.

Peoria, 5.—J. D. Arnold, B. L. T. Bourland, R. Scholst, George T. Harding, T. J. Pickett.

Piatt, 1.—P. K. Hall.

Pike, 10.—John G. Nicolay, Wm. Ross, M. Ross, J. Grimshaw, T. Worthington, W. E. Elder, J. Hall, M. J. Noyes, D. H. Gilmer, O. M. Hatch.

Putnam, 1.—B. C. Lundy.

Randolph, 5.—Thomas McClurken, Casper Horn, J. C. Holbrook, F. B. Anderson, B. J. F. Hanna.

Rock Island, 3.—N. C. Turrell, R. H. Andrews, John V. Cook, Ira O. Wilkinson.

St. Clair, 5.—Dr. Charles Vincenz, J. B. Hoppe, Francis Wenzell, N. Niles, F. A. Carpenter.

Sangamon, 11.—A. Lincoln, Wm. H. Herndon, J. C. Conkling, J. B. Weber, Preston Breckenridge, Wm. Jayne, R. H. Ballinger, Pascal P. Enos, Wm. H. Bailhache, E. L. Baker, Peter Earnest.

*William C. Flagg, the son of Gershom Flagg, also attended the convention, and from the proceedings seems to have acted as a member of it.—Sec'y Hist. Soc.

Schuyler, 2.—John Clark, N. G. Wilcox.

Scott, 4.—N. M. Knapp, John Moses, James B. Young, M. James.

Stark, 1.—T. J. Henderson.

Stephenson, 4.—M. P. Sweet, John H. Davis, George Nolbrecht, H. N. Hibbard.

Tazewell, 5.—D. Cheever, D. Kyes, H. Clark, George W. Shaw, John M. Busch.

Union, 1.—D. L. Phillips.

Vermilion, 3.—Joseph Peters, Martin Bourchall, A. T. Harrison.

Warren, 2.—A. C. Harding, E. A. Paine.

Washington, 2.—J. Miller, D. Kennedy.

Whiteside, 2.—William Manahan, William Prothrow,

Will, 10.—G. D. A. Parks, W. Wright, J. T. Daggett, Wm. B. Hewitt, H. T. Logan, A. McIntosh, S. Anderson, J. O. Norton, Ichabod Codding, P. Stewart.

Winnebago, 4.—F. Burnass, W. Lyman, S. M. Church, T. D. Robertson.

Woodford, 2.—C. D. Banta, R. T. Cassell.

O. H. Browning, of Adams, offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a committee of nine, consisting of one from each congressional district be appointed to report officers for the permanent organization of the convention.

Whereupon the chair appointed the following as the committee: First district, S. M. Church; second district, N. B. Judd; third district, B. C. Cook; Fourth district, Robert Carter; fifth district, O. H. Browning; sixth district, J. C. Conkling; seventh district, S. C. Parks; eighth district, N. Niles; ninth district, David L. Phillips.

On motion of Richard Yates, of Morgan the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That all the delegates in attendance be permitted to take their seats and act as members of this convention, casting however one vote of their respective counties.

The committee appointed to report permanent officers for the convention, by Hon. O. H. Browning, its chairman, made the following report:

FOR PRESIDENT.

John M. Palmer, of Macoupin.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.

J. A. Davis, of Stephenson.
William Ross, of Pike.
James McKie, of Cook.
J. H. Bryant, of Bureau.
A. C. Harding, of Warren.
Richard Yates, of Morgan.
H. C. Johns, of Platt.
George Smith, of Madison.
D. L. Phillips, of Union.
T. A. Marshall, of Coles.
J. M. Ruggles, of Mason.
G. D. A. Parks, of Will.
John Clark, of Schuyler.

FOR SECRETARIES.

H. S. Baker, of Madison.
C. L. Wilson, of Cook.
John Tillson, of Adams.
Washington Bushnell, of LaSalle.
B. J. F. Hanna, of Randolph.

Which report was received and unanimously adopted.

Hon. John M. Palmer, on taking the chair, thanked the convention for the honor conferred on him in an elegant and able address.

On motion of N. B. Judd, of Cook, it was

Resolved, That a committee of nine, consisting of one from each congressional district, be appointed to report resolutions for the action of this convention.

Whereupon, the president appointed the following as that committee:

First district, G. Walbrecht; second district, N. B. Judd; third district, O. Lovejoy; fourth district, A. C. Harding; fifth district, O. H. Browning; sixth district, Wickliff Kitchell; seventh district, S. C. Parks; eighth district, Charles Vincenz; ninth district, D. L. Phillips.

RICHARD YATES

Born in Kentucky January 18, 1818; died November 27, 1873; moved to Illinois in 1831, admitted to the bar, member legislature 1842 to 1849; 1850 elected to congress, Governor of Illinois 1861 to 1865 and U. S. Senator 1865 to 1871.

By permission and courtesy of the Century Co.

Leander Munsell, of Edgar, nominated W. H. BISSELL, of St. Clair county, for governor.

Mr. Rutherford moved that no nomination be made, but that this convention confirm the nomination of Colonel Bissell, which the people have already made.

G. T. Brown, of Madison, desired before any action was taken, to read to the convention a letter he had received from Colonel Bissell, which he read as follows:

BELLEVILLE, ILL., May 24, 1856.

George T. Brown, Esq., Alton, Ill.

DEAR SIR: Having reason to apprehend that my name may be presented to the convention as a candidate for governor, I deem it proper to place in your hands, to be used there, should occasion arise, a simple statement of the condition of my health,

in order that there may be no mistake or misapprehension in regard to it.

The illness from which I have suffered for the last three years has left me with impaired vigor in my lower limbs, so that in walking I still require the use of a cane, and the aid of a friendly arm. From this infirmity, however, I am slowly recovering, and have every reason to expect final and complete restoration. My general health is perfectly good—never was better; and my capacity for business not requiring much locomotion, precisely what it ever was. But I cannot promise, in the event of becoming a candidate, to take the stump, or address the people of the state generally—and this is a matter which I trust you will consider. If I continue to improve, as I have every reason to expect, I shall unquestionably make some speeches, if desirable, but I cannot promise to perambulate the state as some might wish.

If, in view of these facts, the convention deem it proper to nominate me, I shall not decline the honor, though I say, in all candor, I prefer that the nomination should fall on another individual; and should that happen, you can rely upon my most zealous and cheerful efforts in his behalf. Yours truly,

WM. H. BISSELL.

Whereupon the entire convention rose, and with nine long, loud, and hearty cheers, declared that the nomination of COL. WM. H. BISSELL, of St. Clair county, by the people of Illinois, as their candidate for governor, was then and there unanimously confirmed.

On motion of N. Niles, Esq., of St. Clair county, it was unanimously

"*Resolved,* That FRANCIS A. HOFFMAN, of DuPage county, be declared the Anti-Nebraska candidate for the office of lieutenant-governor of the state of Illinois, at the coming election in November."

Which resolution was received by the entire convention with long and loud cheering.

On motion, it was

"*Resolved,* That a committee of nine, including one from each congressional district, be appointed by the chair, to report to the convention suitable candidates for the other state offices."

Whereupon the chair appointed the following as such committee:

First district, L. W. Lawrence; second district, Cyrus Aldrich; third district, W. W. Orme; fourth district, J. D. Arnold; fifth district, A. Williams; sixth district, A. Lincoln; seventh district, T. A. Marshall; eighth district, Thomas McClurken; ninth district, Benjamin T. Wiley.

On motion of John Wentworth, of Cook, it was

"*Resolved,* That the delegates in attendance from the several congressional districts be requested to suggest the name of one person from each congressional district for presidential elector, and three persons for delegates to the national convention to be held at Philadelphia on the 17th proximo; and that a committee of nine, consisting of one from each congressional district, be appointed by the chair to recommend two such electors and six such delegates for the state at large."

The chair appointed the following as said committee:

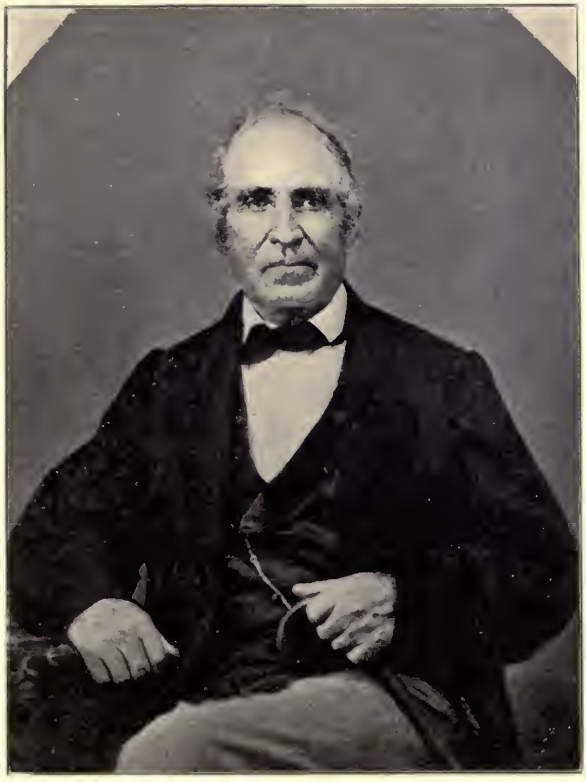
First district, W. Diggins; second district, J. Wentworth; third district, J. Bennett; fourth district, T. J. Pickett; fifth district, A. Williams; sixth district, S. T. Logan; seventh district, J. L. Dugger; eighth district, J. Trible; ninth district, D. L. Phillips.

The districts were then called, and the delegates suggested names as requested, which reports were referred to the last above named committee.

The committee appointed to recommend the names of suitable persons for candidates for the several state offices yet vacant, submitted the following report:

For secretary of state—Ozias M. Hatch, of Pike county.

For state treasurer—James Miller, of McLean.



JAMES MILLER, Bloomington, Ill.

Born November 23, 1795, Virginia; died September 23, 1872, merchant, land owner, State Treasurer 1856 to 1860; see Good Old Times McLean County 308 and Volume II, Transactions McLean County Historical Society.

For state auditor—Jesse K. Dubois, of Lawrence.

For superintendent of common schools—Wm. H. Powell, of Peoria.

Which report was received by the convention, and unanimously adopted.

With this report the committee also laid before the convention a letter from James Miller, Esq., of McLean county, stating that he had not nor did he intend to accept the nomination recently tendered him for the office of state treasurer, by the American party of Illinois; that he never had, nor did he now belong to that order.

The committee appointed to recommend the names of suitable persons as presidential electors and delegates to the national convention submitted the following report, which was unanimously adopted.

Electors for the state at large—Abraham Lincoln, of Sangamon; Frederick Hecker, of St. Clair.

First district, elector—Elisha P. Ferry, of Lake.

Second district, elector—Jerome J. Beardsley, of Rock Island; assistant elector, J. V. Eustace, of Lee.

Third district, elector—William Fithian, of Vermilion; assistant, —— Lundy.

Fourth district, elector—T. Judson Hale, of Knox; assistants, T. J. Pickett, of Peoria, and Wm. P. Kellogg, of Fulton.

Fifth district, elector—Abraham Jonas, of Adams; assistants, James Stark and John C. Bagley.

Sixth district, elector—Wm. H. Herndon, of Sangamon; assistant, N. M. Knapp.

Seventh district, elector—H. P. H. Bromwell, of Fayette; assistant S. C. Parks.

Eighth district, elector—Friend S. Rutherford, of Madison; assistant, Francis B. Anderson, of Randolph.

Ninth district, elector—David L. Phillips, of Union.

DELEGATES TO THE PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION.

For the State at Large.

George Schneider, of Cook; Thomas J. Turner, of Stephenson; J. O. Norton, of Will; J. D. Arnold, of Peoria; G. T. Brown, of Madison; J. B. Tenny, of Logan.

First District.

M. T. Sweet, of Stephenson; S. M. Church, of Winnebago; W. A. Little, of Jo Daviess; alternates—N. C. Geer, of Lake; A. C. Fuller, of Boone; A. J. Joslyn, of McHenry.

Second District.

Cyrus Aldrich, E. R. Allen, N. B. Judd; alternates—George W. Waite, Miles S. Henry, Hugh T. Dickey.

Third District.

W. H. L. Wallace, A. W. Mack, Owen Lovejoy; alternates—B. C. Cook, Jesse Bennett, Elisha Harkness.

Fourth District.

T. J. Pickett, of Peoria; A. C. Harding, of Warren; W. P. Myers, of Mercer; alternates—Daniel Cheever, of Tazewell; Silas Ramsey, of Marshall; J. H. Howe, of Henry; W. P. Kellogg, of Fulton; T. J. Henderson, of Stark; J. D. Arnold, of Peoria.

Fifth District.

John Tillson, C. B. Lawrence, Wm. Ross; alternates—C. S. Cowan, W. B. Powers, N. G. Wilcox.

Sixth District.

John M. Palmer, N. M. Knapp, A. Lincoln; alternates—P. P. Enos, W. H. Bailhache, M. Green, David Pierson, Joseph Cassel.

Seventh District.

A. C. Johns, of Macon; Leander Munsell, of Edgar; A. B. Archer, of Clark; alternates—Anderson McPheeters, of Moultrie; T. A. Marshall, of Coles; J. W. Clemens, of Macon.

Eighth District.

M. G. Atwood, of Madison; Francis Grumm, of St. Clair; D. K. Green, of Marion; alternates—J. C. Holbrook, of Randolph, Dr. Carpenter, of St. Clair, —— Miller, of Washington.

Ninth District.

B. L. Wiley, of Union; Edward Holden, of Jackson; John Olney, of Gallatin.

The committee appointed to prepare and report resolutions expressive of the sense of this convention, submit the following report, which was unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, The present administration has prostituted its powers, and devoted all its energies to the propagation of slavery, and to its extension into territories heretofore dedicated to freedom, against the known wishes of the people of such territories, to the suppression of the freedom of speech, and of the press; and to the revival of the odious doctrine of constructive treason, which has always been the resort of tyrants, and their most powerful engine of injustice and oppression; and,

WHEREAS, We are convinced that an effort is making to subvert the principles, and ultimately to change the form of our government, and which it becomes all patriots, all who love their country, and the cause of human freedom to resist; therefore

Resolved, That foregoing all former differences of opinion upon other questions, we pledge ourselves to unite in opposition to the present administration, and to the party which upholds and supports it, and to use all honorable and constitutional means to wrest the government from the unworthy hands which now control it, and bring it back in its administration to the principles and practices of Washington, Jefferson and their great and good compatriots of the revolution.

Resolved, That we hold, in accordance with the opinions and practices of all the great statesmen of all parties, for the first sixty years of the administration of the government, that, under the constitution, congress possesses full power to pro-

hibit slavery in the territories; and that whilst we will maintain all constitutional rights of the south, we also hold that justice, humanity, the principles of freedom as expressed in our Declaration of Independence, and our national constitution and the purity and perpetuity of our government, require that power should be exerted to prevent the extension of slavery into territories heretofore free.

Resolved, That the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was unwise, unjust and injurious; an open and aggravated violation of the plighted faith of the states, and that the attempt of the present administration to force slavery into Kansas against the known wishes of the legal voters of that territory, is an arbitrary and tyrannous violation of the rights of the people to govern themselves, and that we will strive by all constitutional means, to secure to Kansas and Nebraska the legal guarantee against slavery of which they were deprived at the cost of the violation of the plighted faith of the nation.

Resolved, That we are devoted to the Union, and will to the last extremity, defend it against the efforts now being made by the disunionists of the administration to compass its dissolution, and that we will support the constitution of the United States in all its provisions; regarding it as the sacred bond of our Union, and the only safeguard for the preservation of the rights of ourselves and our posterity.

Resolved, That we are in favor of the immediate admission of Kansas as a member of this confederacy, under the constitution adopted by the people of said territory.

Resolved, That the spirit of our institutions, as well as the constitution of our country guarantee the liberty of conscience as well as political freedom, and that we will proscribe no one, by legislation or otherwise, on account of religious opinions, or in consequence of place of birth.

Resolved, That in Lyman Trumbull, our distinguished senator, the people of Illinois have an able and consistent exponent of their principles, and that his course in the senate meets with our unqualified approbation.

Which report was received and unanimously adopted.

Mr. Wentworth submitted the following resolution which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we are in favor of the strictest economy in the administration of our state government and a faithful application of all its revenues to the liquidation of our state debt. And that the practice of using our state funds for the purpose of private speculations, whereby a very large defalcation has occurred in our state treasury, cannot be too severely censured; and we therefore take issue with the resolution of the recent convention at Springfield which endorsed the course of our present governor.

Mr. Skinner offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to act as a central committee for the purpose of calling future conventions, and to fill vacancies in our nomination (in cases where the nominations may become vacant, and it may be too late to call a convention to fill the same,) and do such other business as usually devolves upon central committees; and also to act as a disbursing committee of such funds as may come to their hands. Whereupon the following committee was appointed:

CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

James C. Conkling, Sangamon county; Asahel Gridley, McLean county; B. C. Cook, LaSalle county; Charles H. Ray, Cook county; N. B. Judd, Cook county.

Mr. Wm. A. James, of Cook, offered the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That this convention recommend every town in every county in the state to form Anti-Nebraska clubs, for the purpose of effecting a thorough organization of the party prior to the ensuing election.

George T. Brown, of Madison, submitted the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted, amid deafening shouts, cheers and other manifestations of excited approbation.

Resolved, That STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, having laid his "ruthless hand" upon a sacred compact, which had "an origin akin to that of the constitution," and which had "become canonized in the hearts of the American people," has given the lie to his past history, proved himself recreant to the free principles of this government, violated the confidence of the people of Illinois, and now holds his seat in the senate while he misrepresents them.

Mr. Judd offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this convention are hereby tendered to the citizens of Bloomington for their kind hospitalities, and also to the committee of arrangements for the satisfactory manner in which they have discharged their self-imposed duties towards this body.

On motion of O. H. Browning:

Resolved, That the proceedings of this convention be signed by the officers and published by all the Anti-Nebraska papers in the state.

On motion of H. N. Hibbard:

Resolved, That the thanks of this convention be tendered to the presiding officers for the able and impartial manner in which they have discharged their duties.

On motion the committee adjourned *sine die.*

John M. Palmer, president.

Vice-presidents—J. A. Davis, Wm. Ross, James McKie, J. H. Bryant, A. C. Harding, Richard Yates, H. C. Johns, D. L. Phillips, George Smith, T. A. Marshall, J. M. Ruggles, G. D. A. Parks, John Clark.

Secretaries—H. T. Baker, C. L. Wilson, John Tillson, W. Bushnell, B. J. F. Hanna.

A full, true and correct copy from the files of the *"Journal"* of Springfield, Ill., of May 30, 1856.

HENRY C. RANNEY,
Copyist.

The convention of May 29, 1856, although called as a delegate convention, did not strictly preserve that character but rather resolved itself into a mass convention, as in several instances parties acted as officers of the convention whose names do not appear on the official roll as delegates at all.

In several counties the *Chicago Press* and also *Chicago Democrat* give additional delegates to those given in the official list. We give below the delegates in these counties as they appear in these papers:

Bureau County—Charles C. Kelsey, George Radcliffe, George W. Stipp, jr., John H. Bryant.

Lee County—E. M. Ingals, J. V. Eustace, Dr. Charles Gardner, John Dixon, Dr. Oliver Everett, George E. Haskell, Lorenzo Wood, Benjaman F. Shaw, Dr. Adams, Thomas W. Eustace, Andrew McPherson, S. R. Upham, Cyrus Aldrich, Joseph Crawford, James L. Camp, William E. Ives, Oziss Wheeler, Jerome Porter, A. A. Benjamin, S. G. Patrick, S. S. Williams, I. S. Boardman, David Welty, George R. Linn, Benjamin Gilman.

McDonough County—L. H. Walters, C. W. Craig, J. E. Wynne, S. P. Higbe, Anthony Corker.

Ogle County—Charles C. Royce, F. A. McNiff, G. W. Southwick.

Richland County—Edward Kitchell.

La Salle County—Washington Bushnell was one of the secretaries of the convention although he does not appear on the official list of delegates.

In the official list of Mason county J. M. Ruggles does not appear as a delegate but he acted as one of the vice-presidents of the convention and we have added his name to the list.

In McLean county the official list gives the alternates as the attending delegates. We have given the delegates and alternates as elected. The delegates evidently attended, as Gen. W. W. Orme, one of them, was one of the officers of the convention.

David McWilliams of Livingston county also attended as a delegate and we have added his name to the official list.

Elisha Harkness of Champaign county was also elected and attended as a delegate from that county and we have added his name to the official list.

The delegates and alternates elected from St. Clair county were as follows:

Delegates:	Alternates:
Philip H. Eisenmayer,	H. G. Harrison,
J. B. Hoppe,	S. Anderson,
Dr. Charles Vincenz,	Conrad Bowman,
Nathaniel Niles.	Dr. F. A. Carpenter
J. Thomas.	Edward Abend.

The delegates and alternates elected from Randolph county were:

Delegates:	Alternates:
Thomas McClucken,	B. J. F. Hanna,
Caspar Horn,	R. J. Hanna,

We have taken great pains to obtain a correct roll of the delegates attending the convention but in many instances it has been impossible to verify the list and there doubtless still remains many errors in it.

The electoral ticket nominated at this convention was defeated by the following vote:

Buchanan and Breckenridge, democrats	105,348
Fremont and Dayton, republicans	96,189
Plurality for Buchanan and Breckenridge	9,159
Fillmore and Donaldson, American or Know-Nothing	37,444
Republican (96,189) and American (37,444) vote	133,633
Democratic vote	105,348
Majority of votes against democratic ticket	27,285

The state ticket nominated by this convention was elected as follows:

Gov. Bissell, rep	111,375	W. A. Richardson, dem.,	106,643	Bissell's plur'lty	4,732
Lieut-Gov., Wood, r,	110,534	Hamilton, dem	106,297	Wood's "	4,237
Sec. State, Hatch, r,	115,538	Snyder, dem	106,610	Hatch's "	8,928
Auditor, Dubois, r,	199,234	Casey, dem	106,230	Dubois' "	3,004
Supt. S., Powell, r,	109,528	St. Mathews, dem	106,521	Powell's "	3,007
Treasurer, Miller, r,	128,430	Moore, dem	107,448	Miller's "	20,982

Congressional—Rep., 118,011; dem., 110,038; rep. plurality, 7,973.

Average American vote for governor, lieutenant-governor, secretary of state, auditor and superintendent of schools, was 18,530.—*Tribune Almanac, 1857.*

James Miller, candidate for treasurer, was on both the republican and American tickets.

E. M. PRINCE, Sec'y.

NOTE.—The *Pantagraph* of Bloomington, Illinois, of May 14, 1856, published the call for the convention of May 29 and beneath it published a call signed by John M. Scott, W. C. Hobbs, J. H. Wickizer, L. Graves, J. E. McClun, L. Lawrence, James Vandolah and Leonard Swett for a mass meeting of the voters of McLean county, favorable to the Anti-Nebraska movement, to assemble in Bloomington, on Saturday, the 17th inst. to select three delegates to the convention. At this mass meeting Dr. W. C. Hobbs was elected chairman and W. W. Orme secretary. James Gilmore, sr., Dr. Harrison Noble and William W. Orme, delegates to the State convention and Green B. Larrison, David Cheney and A. T. Briscoe, alternates. Resolutions were adopted demanding that the friends of the Union forget old party associations in opposition to the extension of Slavery over free territory, declaring slave labor and free labor are incompatible with each other, that our constitution does not carry nor protect slavery, except in the States, that its framers did not intend to extend this institution, that the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act was a wilful violation of the plighted faith of the nation, an act insulting to the Free States, and shamelessly in defiance of the public opinion of this age and of all enlightened, unprejudicial people, that slavery is a creation of municipal law and cannot exist one moment without it, that outside State jurisdiction the constitutional power of the Federal government should be exerted to secure life, liberty and the happiness of all men, that there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except for the punishment of crimes, in any of the territories of the United States.—*Pantagraph*, May 21, 1856.

Telegrams.

The Ohio Republican Convention was also in session May 29. The late Jesse W. Fell and Judge Owen T. Reeves, then a young lawyer recently from Ohio, prepared a telegram to the Ohio convention, submitted it to General Palmer who signed it and it was wired to Columbus. A return telegram was received and read amid great applause. The Mrs. Robinson alluded to in the Bloomington telegram was the wife of the first state governor of Kansas. We are indebted to the Ohio Archæological and Historical Society for a copy of these telegrams.—SEC'Y HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

BLOOMINGTON, ILL., May 29, 1856.

To the President of the Ohio Republican Convention, Columbus.

The delegates of the free men of Illinois in convention assembled send greeting to the free men of Ohio. William H. Bissell is nominated for governor with the enthusiastic acclaim by the most enthusiastic delegate convention ever assembled in Illinois. Governor Reeder and Mrs. Robinson are here. They have appeared before the public and been greeted by the wildest applause. The excitement consequent upon the latest outrages at Lawrence, Kansas, is sweeping like wildfire over the land.

JOHN M. PALMER.

COLUMBUS, OHIO, May 29, 1856.

To the Republican Convention of Illinois, Bloomington:

Ohio and Illinois respond. The announcement of the gallant Bissell's nomination was received with tumultuous cheers. The names of Governor Reeder and Mrs. Robinson were greeted with three cheers from the thousands assembled here. Judge Hunt and General Lane, of Kansas, are here and speak this evening. All is enthusiasm.

OLIVER P. BROWN.
President.

(The *"Democratic Press"* of May 31, 1856, gives the following, which should be added to above):

The convention was then addressed at length by Messrs. Browning, Lovejoy, Lincoln and Cook, and adjourned with nine cheers for the ticket and as many more for the nominees.

Chicago Democrat of June 7, 1856.

The Bloomington Convention.

ANTI-NEBRASKA STATE CONVENTION.

A state convention of the Anti-Nebraska party in Illinois will be held in the city of Bloomington, on Thursday the 29th day of May, 1856, for the purpose of choosing candidates for state officers, appointing delegates to the national convention, transacting such other business as may properly come before the body. The committee have adopted as the basis of representation the ratio of one delegate to every 6,000 inhabitants, and an additional delegate for every fractional number of 2,000 and over; but counties that contain less than 6,000 inhabitants are entitled to one delegate.

Wm. B. Ogden,	S. M. Church,
E. A. Dudley,	Thos. J. Pickett,
R. J. Oglesby,	G. D. A. Parks,
Ira O. Wilkinson,	W. H. Herndon,
Joe Gillespie.	D. L. Phillips,

We never met a more determined and encouraged body of men than at the late Anti-Slavery Extension State Convention. It is a remarkable fact, that a majority of the delegates voted for General Pierce, as also did a majority of the nominees.

One of our candidates for elector, Mr. Ferry, was upon the Pierce and King ticket.

Imitating the example of the slavery extension convention, the old party lines did not come up, and Mr. Lincoln, a talented old line Whig, was placed upon the ticket as an offset

RICHARD J. OGLESBY

Born in Kentucky 1824, admitted to the bar 1845, served in Mexican War, three years mining in California, elected State Senator in 1860, Colonel 8th. Illinois Volunteers 1861, promoted Brigadier and afterwards Major General, elected Governor of Illinois in 1864 1872 and 1884.

U. S. Senator 1873 to 1879. Died at Elkhart, Illinois, April 24, 1899.

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to Mr. Constable, an old political associate of Mr. Lincoln, but who now goes for slavery extension.

Mr. Hecker, of St. Clair, one of the electors at large, is one of the most talented men in the United States. He was a leader in the last German revolution, and was for many years the radical leader in the German parliament.

The southern delegates gave the lie to the story so often repeated by the slavery extensionists, viz., that all the old Henry Clay Whigs were intending to vote the slavery extension ticket. The Henry Clay Whigs are divided at the south exactly as they are every where else. Those who have an interest in slavery, remote or direct, favor making Kansas a slave state, and will vote for Richardson. The others will vote for Bissell.

Several young men in southern Illinois have been to Kansas. Some have been massacred, and some have come home to tell the story of their wrongs. The people there have been much aroused by recent events, and will give a good account of themselves in November.

Colonel Bissell is favorably known all through southern Illinois, and his friends are confident that he will get a very large vote there.

(From "*Democratic Press*" of May 30, 1856.) Editorial correspondence.

THE ANTI-NEBRASKA CONVENTION.

PIKE HOUSE, BLOOMINGTON,

May 29, 9 a.m.

The train arrived here an hour ago. We found the city full of people. The verandahs, halls and doorways of the Pike House are crowded with a dense mass of delegates. Men are here from all parts of the state. Egypt is in council with us. It is a spontaneous outpouring of the people.

Governor Reeder came down with us from Chicago. His arrival has added to the enthusiasm. He will address the people some time today.

While I am writing speakers are addressing the people from the portico of the Pike House. The feeling is intense, and in every bosom beats the stern resolve to relieve our noble state from the stigma under which it now rests. Illinois furnished the "ruthless hand" which broke down the barrier erected by our patriot fathers against the spread of slavery. Her people must repudiate the act. They will do it. Mark that.

Last evening, I am informed, speaking was kept up in front of the hotel until a late hour. The venerable Colonel Dixon, of Lee county, led off in a speech that produced a powerful impression. He was followed by Messrs. Lincoln, Palmer, Washburn, Doctor Schroeder, and others.

The feeling is strong for Bissell and Hoffman. Present indications are that these gentlemen will be nominated by acclamation.

FREDERICK HECKER

Born September 28, 1811, Baden, Germany; died 1881. General Revolutionary Army, Germany 1848; Colonel 24th Illinois Volunteers, War of Rebellion. Nominated Elector at large convention May 29, 1856.

12, m.—The convention was called to order at 10 o'clock, and organized temporarily by the appointment of Archibald Williams, chairman, H. S. Baker and George F. Brown, secretaries.

A committee of nine was appointed to nominate permanent officers of the convention. While the committee were out a stirring address was delivered by Mr. Emory, of Kansas. Mr. Emory went to Kansas a Pierce man, but when the leaders of the Pierce Democracy made the admission of slavery a test of party fealty he left the party. Mr. Emory detailed the past difficulties and present perils of the Free State party in Kansas in a most graphic manner, eliciting feeling responses from the audience.

In taking the chair the president delivered a neat and appropriate address, thanking the convention for the honor conferred, and expressing his readiness to co-operate with all good men in meeting the issues that have been forced upon the free north.

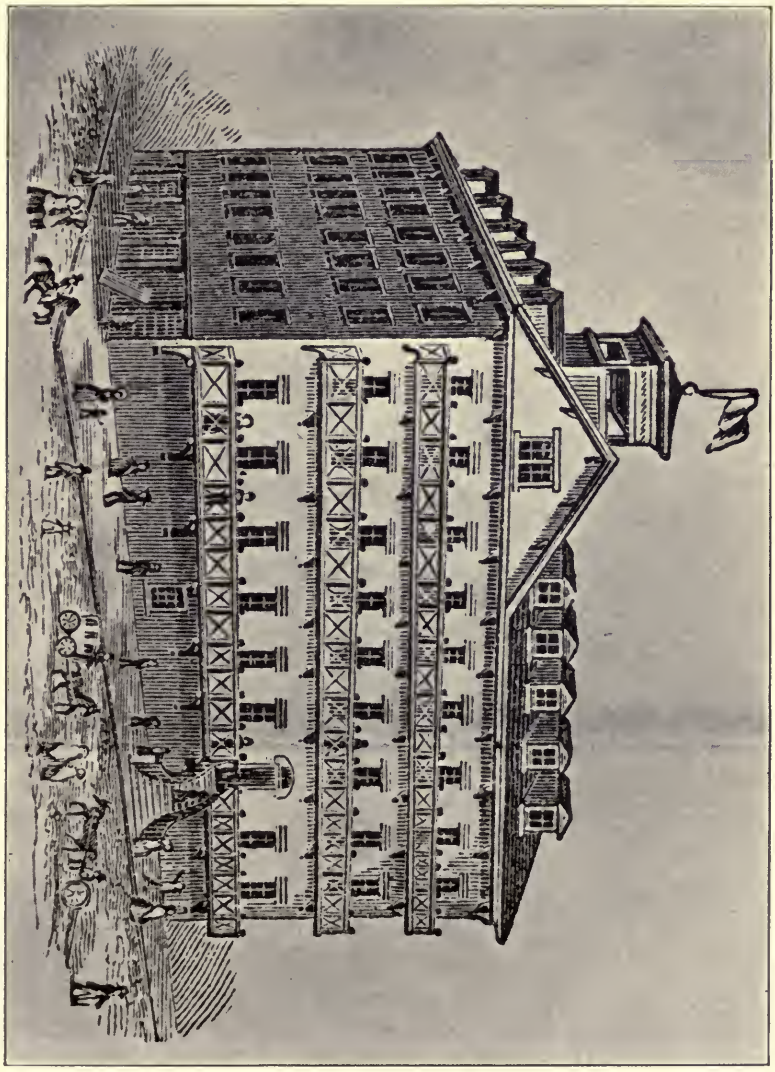
Mr. Munsell, of Edgar county, moved the nomination of Colonel Bissell, for governor, by acclamation, which was received with tremendous cheering. George T. Brown, Esq., of Alton, asked permission to lay before the convention the following letter from Colonel Bissell, before acting upon Mr. Munsell's motion.

(For letter see *"official" report.*)

The reading of this letter was received with the unbounded enthusiasm, and when the motion was put, the entire convention rose to their feet, and ratified the nomination by cheer after cheer.

When silence was again restored, Judge Niles, of St. Clair, moved the nomination of Francis A. Hoffman, of DuPage county for lieutenant-governor, which motion was carried unanimously by acclamation, amidst enthusiastic cheering.

A motion to adjourn was voted down, and Hon. Richard Yates responded to a call of the audience in a stirring speech, after which the convention adjourned till 2 p.m.



THE PIKE HOUSE.

Committees were appointed on resolutions and nominations, which will report at the afternoon session. About one thousand people were present at the sitting of the convention.

This evening Governor Reeder will address the people in the court house square. Greater enthusiasm I have never witnessed, and the most cheering accounts are brought in by the delegates from the different portions of the state. Illinois must be true to herself. The ticket put in nomination here today must be elected.

From the "*Democratic Press*," May 31, 1856. *Editorial correspondence.*

THE BLOOMINGTON CONVENTION.

BLOOMINGTON, May 29, 11 p.m.

The afternoon session of the convention was full of interest. The reports of committees on nominations for remainder of state ticket, electors, delegates, etc., were promptly made and cordially accepted.

The commmitte on resolutions reported about 4 o'clock. Each resolution was received with applause. They appeared to meet the expectation and fill the desires of every delegate. A single amendment was offered to the second resolution, but it was withdrawn after a brief discussion, and the resolutions were adopted without a dissenting voice.

Then commenced the speaking. O. H. Browning, of Quincy, was first called to the stand. His remarks were addressed mainly to the old Clay-Whigs. He read extracts from the speeches of Henry Clay from his first entrance upon public life down to the close of his career, all of which proved him to have been steadfastly and uniformly opposed to the spread of slavery into free territory, and that had he still been upon the stage of action when his great measures of pacification—the Missouri Compromise—was ruthlessly violated, his voice and vote would have been the same in 1854, that they were in 1820. Mr. Browning's vindication of the character of Henry Clay from the imputations cast upon it by the slavery extensionists of the present day, who profess to find in his political life evi-

ORVILLE H. BROWNING

Born in Kentucky 1810, died at Quincy, Illinois, August 10, 1881; admitted to the bar and removed to Quincy, Illinois 1831; served in Black Hawk War, State Senator 1836 to 1840 and House 1840 to 1843. Delegate to Republican National Convention 1860. U. S. Senator 1861 to 1863. Secretary Interior 1866 to 1869.

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dence that, if living, he would now be ranged side by side with them, was conclusive and triumphant. There were numbers of the admirers and political adherents of the great Kentucky statesman present, some of them southerners like himself, others of northern origin, and not one of them but felt that the truth of history had been successfully vindicated, and the character of their former chief placed beyond the aspersions of those who are seeking to sanctify with his name a great crime from which he should have shrunk as from dishonor.

Mr. Browning was followed by Owen Lovejoy, of Princeton, in an eloquent and telling speech of half an hour. Mr. Lovejoy stated that he had never proposed and never would propose any political action by congress with respect to slavery in the states where it now exists.—He opposed its extension—that was all. He referred to the fact that his political opponents had always misrepresented him on this subject. Individually he did not care for that, but he was determined that the cause with which he was identified should not be injured through these misrepresentations. Many who heard Mr. Lovejoy for the first time were agreeably disappointed by his declaration of sentiments on the political aspect of the slavery question, and his eloquent appeal in favor of the cause in which they were embarked, as defined in the resolutions just adopted by the convention, will not soon be forgotten by them.

Abraham Lincoln, of Springfield, was next called out, and made *the* speech of the occasion. Never has it been our fortune to listen to a more eloquent and masterly presentation of a subject. I shall not mar any of its fine proportions or brilliant passages by attempting even a synopsis of it. Mr. Lincoln must write it out and let it go before all the people. For an hour and a half he held the assemblage spell bound by the power of his argument, the intense irony of his invective, and the deep earnestness and fervid brilliancy of his eloquence. When he concluded, the audience sprang to their feet and cheer after cheer told how deeply their hearts had been touched, and their souls warmed up to a generous enthusiasm.

It was now 7 o'clock, and the large hall was still densely packed and the people refused to go. Burton C. Cook, of Ottawa, was called to the stand. His speech was pointed and effective. He alluded to the fact that not only the admirers of the Sage of Ashland were called upon to repel attempts to link the name of their departed chieftain with the great American crime of extending slavery into free territory. His own political idol had also been invoked in aid of the same base purpose. The Sage of Monticello, the author of the Declaration of Independence, and of the ordinances of 1787—the im-

OWEN LOVEJOY

Born at Albion, Maine, January 6, 1811; died March 25, 1864; moved to Alton, Illinois, and was present when his brother Elijah was murdered; in 1838 he became minister of the Congregational church at Princeton, Ill., but devoted most of his time to anti-slavery meetings; 1854 elected to the Legislature, 1856 to his death a member of congress. A peerless, fearless anti-slavery agitator.

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mortal Jefferson—his name, too, had been desecrated by the conspirators. But these attempts to falsify history, and to couple a heinous crime with our illustrious dead, would yet react upon those who, by such means, endeavor to shield themselves from the indignation of an outraged people. Mr. Cook in a very humorous way, illustrated the vacillating course of the leaders of the Democratic party in Illinois, and concluded with a glowing tribute to Colonel Bissell, and an appeal to those who had enlisted under so gallant a leader to see to it that his banner is not permitted now for the first time to be trailed in the dust.

Then the convention adjourned *sine die,* with nine cheers for the ticket, and as many more for the cause.

After supper from six to eight thousand persons assembled in the court house square to hear Governor Reeder. I regret my inability to report his speech. It occupied more than three hours in the delivery, and was listended to with the most intense interest by that vast multitude. Governor Reeder recounted in a plain, unvarnished manner, the series of outrages to which the settlers in Kansas had been exposed, and made evident the complicity of the federal government in those outrages. He showed how Kansas had been subjugated by the slave power of this country, partly through the connivance, and partly through the direct agency of the general government. The points made were clear and unanswerable. That speech if delivered throughout the nation, would leave it with but a single party, and a single purpose in it, so far as the masses are concerned. It showed the existence of a despotism with which there is nothing in the old world that will bear the slightest comparison,—a disregard of life and of property, and of all the rights of individuals, the like of which, even in the feeblest governments of the world, can nowhere else be found. —Occasionally, when describing the results of what now predominates on our frontier, or when contrasting the differences between what Kansas and the whole national domain east of the Pacific would be if consecrated to freedom, and what it must become should the great conspiracy to make a slave state of Kansas, prove successful. Governor Reeder's eloquence assumed a high character, but he avoided everything like declamation throughout his speech. There was deep feeling and strong passion aroused, and an irrepressible sympathy for our fellow-citizens in Kansas who were the victims of the wrongs and outrages recounted, but they were feelings and passions and sympathies awakened by the simple statement of facts as they had occurred within the knowledge and under the immediate observation of the speaker.

But I can say no more now. The up train by which I design sending this will pass in a few moments, and I must

close it up. I am satisfied, let me say however, before closing, that this day's deliberation have made an impress upon the public mind and heart that will not fade out during the present generation. The fire kindled here will spread throughout the state, and when the ides of November shall have passed away, Illinois will have entered a most emphatic protest against her recreant senator, and against her other representatives whose action has been instrumental in bringing the present perils upon the country.

Nicolay & Hay's History of Abraham Lincoln, Vol., 2, p. 27.

"There were stirring speeches by eloquent leaders, eagerly listened to, and vociferously applauded; but scarcely a man moved from his seat in the convention hall until Mr. Lincoln had been heard. Every one felt the fitness of his making the closing argument and exhortation, and right nobly did he honor their demand. A silence full of emotion filled the assembly, as for a moment before beginning, his tall form stood in commanding attitude on the rostrum, the impressiveness of his theme and the significance of the occasion reflected in his thoughtful and earnest features. The spell of the hour was visibly upon him, and holding his audience in rapt attention, he closed in a brilliant peroration with an appeal to the people to join the Republican standard, to

> Come as the winds come, when forests are rended;
> Come as the waves come, when navies are stranded.

The influence was irresistible; the audience rose and acknowledged the speaker's power with cheer upon cheer. Unfortunately the speech was never reported; but its effect lives vividly in the memory of all who heard it, and it crowned his right to popular leadership in his own state which thereafter was never disputed."

Letter of John H. Bryant, one of the vice-presidents of the convention, to the *Evening Post* of New York City, of

which his brother, the poet, William Cullen Bryant, was editor.

PRINCETON, ILL., June 5, 1856.

You have some days since heard of our glorious convention at Bloomington on the 29th ult. It was indeed a glorious meeting. All parts of the state were represented, and all seem of one heart and one mind. There was no intriguing, no log-rolling, to secure votes for this or that candidate. The question, and the only question, seemed to be, who will best represent our principles, and at the same time secure the votes of the people.

Happily on this point there was but one opinion, and the entire ticket was nominated and all the business of the convention executed without a difference of opinion worth naming. The convention was the largest, and contained more strong, earnest, truth-loving men, than were ever assembled at once before in our state. Old Democrats, old Whigs, and old Liberty men, who had never acted otherwise than with their respective parties before, here acted shoulder to shoulder, united by a feeling of common sympathy in devising means to save our heritage of liberty from destruction, and to drive back the all-grasping power of slavery, to its acknowledged bounds. I doubt if such unity and enthusiasm, in so large a body who have never before acted together, was ever before witnessed. No well-informed man has now any doubt as to the position Illinois will occupy in November next. The ticket placed before the people by the convention at Bloomington, with Bissell at its head, will sweep the state by at least 20,000 majority. I know that you eastern people have always put us down as a Nebraska state, or, at best, doubtful. Illinois will cast her votes for the candidates nominated at Philadelphia, and no mistake. Just look at it. In 1852, General Pierce with a smooth sea and the wind fair in his sail, only carried the state over Scott and Hale by 6,000 votes. In 1854 after the passage of the Nebraska bill, his party was beaten on congressional candidates by more that 15,000. Now after two years of misrule—after the burnings and butcheries of Kansas have roused up the people to a

feeling of deeper indignation than was ever before known in this country, with the most popular state ticket ever placed before them, is it unreasonable to suppose that we can carry the state against Douglas and his followers? Besides all the changes among our old settlers in our favor, and they may be counted by thousands, even within the last three months, we have gained other thousands by emigration, for the emigration of the last two years has been largely in our favor.

Let our eastern friends then no longer despond or despair in regard to Illinois. She is safe for freedom and the constitution—for republicanism and right. If you, of the Atlantic states, can give us Pennsylvania, it is all we ask of you. Give us Pennsylvania and we are safe. I hear of meetings, large and enthusiastic, in all parts of the state, held to ratify our state ticket, and give aid to the free state settlers of Kansas. At these meetings many of the old Democrats renounce their allegiance to their party, and declare in favor of ours. If these things continue, we shall hardly have more than one party by November. We are raising large amounts of money, horses, cattle, wagons, and other articles, to send to Kansas to sustain and encourage the free state settlers there. Almost every county in northern Illinois has had, or will have its meetings for this purpose, and the spirit and liberality manifested, shows how deeply the people are excited and aroused. Many people are going to Kansas from this vicinity to try their fortunes as settlers. They will go in companies across Iowa, prepared to defend themselves. There is no disposition here to give the matter up, as long as there is any hope of making a free state there. Still, the feeling is that the result of the presidential election will decide the fate of our western territories, in regard to freedom and slavery. If we cannot beat the slave power at the polls, we certainly cannot defeat their designs in Kansas, when they have the immense power of the general government in their hands.

J. H. B.

"The Lost Speech."

At the convention of 1856, enthused by the sympathy of the audience and feeling perhaps a prophetic insight into the future. Mr. Lincoln made one of his great speeches, great even for him in which he showed the sinfulness of slavery and the need of a new party to curb the aggressions of the slave power, and so preserve the Union from impending destruction.

His audience spell-bound by his eloquence and earnestness listened only to applaud. The reporters, affected the same as the other hearers, made no notes of the speech. This has been called the "Lost Speech" of Mr. Lincoln. Since then portions of this speech have lingered in men's minds like some half forgotten music which one thinks he can recall, but regretfully finds it an elusive dream. Lately there has been published a "Lost Speech" made up from alleged notes.

The McLean County Historical Society does not think it proper to send out a report of this re-union without stating that in this community, where many now living heard the great speech and where Mr. Lincoln was so well known and loved, all of his friends consider the speech still lost.

The Historical Society had hoped to recover from the memory of the still living hearers some portions of that speech but found their efforts in vain.

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